*Samsung Flight $69.99, Nokia 5800 $99.99, Samsung Forever $69.99, LG Xenon (blue) $19.99 until Feb. 15/10 and $49.99 thereafter, LG Pop $19.99 available starting Feb. 16/10; all with new activation on any 3-yr. term voice plan. Taxes extra. Early cancellation fees apply. © 2010 Rogers Wireless.

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Google taking aim at Facebook

TECH Google is making it easier to socialize on its email service. It's unveiling a new Google Buzz feature that sets up a face-off with Facebook.

The feature unveiled yesterday will enable Gmail users to create status updates on Google Buzz and comment on the updates posted by friends.

Other tools turn Gmail into a showcase for sharing video, pictures and web links to interesting stories, just as users can on Facebook and Twitter.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News on the Move

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Vancouver Games

Countdown to 2010

Follow Metro as we bring you daily coverage leading up to the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

- **Today — Women's hockey team toughed it out in Dawson's Creek, page 19**

On the web

Visit metronews.ca for news updates

Olympics **Chan takes to the ice**

PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto's Patrick Chan practises his routine yesterday ahead of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver. Chan is considered one of Canada's best hopes for a gold medal. The Games begin this Friday. More Olympic coverage, page 19

'Full-steam ahead'

Despite scandal, Giambrone has no plans to abandon mayoral bid

Gobsmacked Toronto politicians are reacting with horror, amusement and everything in between to an unfolding sex scandal that is tarnishing former golden boy Adam Giambrone.

"Shock, shock," is how Coun. Joe Mihevc described his reaction to the exclusive in yesterday's Toronto Star in which 32-year-old mayoral candidate Giambrone admitted to an "inappropriate relationship" with a 19-year-old university student.

"I just read it an hour ago," Mihevc said, shaking his head. "Pain — that's all I can say."

The head of Giambrone's campaign said the young TTC chair was having "a painful day" but doesn't think his admission of an "inappropriate relationship" with a university student will kill his dream of being Toronto's mayor.

Adam Giambrone

John Laschinger said that Giambrone spent the day at home, reaching out to friends and advisers, many of whom contacted him with messages of "support and sympathy" since a bombshell interview with student Kristen Lucas ran yesterday.

"I'm sure he's listening to people and talking to people, but at this point our intention is full-steam ahead," said Giambrone's campaign chair and a veteran political organizer.

"It's a painful day for Adam. It's embarrassing and reflects on (live-in girlfriend) Sarah (McQuarrie) and her friends and family," but Giambrone has been "fully frank and transparent" since the story hit, Laschinger said.

"People are proud that he took responsibility for his actions." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Soldier's arrest prompts calls on cold cases

INVESTIGATION Ontario police spearheading a broad investigation of a military commander facing murder and sexual assault charges said yesterday they're fielding calls from other forces and families of victims of crime about so-called cold cases.

Col. Russell Williams, 46, is charged with first-degree murder in the deaths of Jessica Lloyd, 27, of Belleville, and Cpl. Marie France Comeau, 38. He is also charged with forcible confinement, break and enter and sexual assault after two women were allegedly attacked during two separate home invasions in the Tweed area in September.

A career military man who's been stationed in various cities across Canada and internationally, Williams was remanded into custody Monday and is scheduled to appear in court again via video Feb. 18.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MORE COVERAGE, PAGE 6

Postings

- In addition to CFB Trenton, Col. Russell Williams has been stationed in Shearwater, N.S., 412 Squadron in Ottawa, Camp Mirage in Dubai, and attended military language school in Gatineau, Que.

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News in brief

POWER Premier Dalton McGuinty says the Ontario government is in talks with a major wind turbine maker about possibly setting up shop in the province. McGuinty says there is no deal with Denmark-based Vestas yet, but there's "a conversation that's ongoing" about a possible venture. Vestas would be the second international corporation to settle in Ontario in the last few months. In January, the province announced a $7-billion deal with Korea's Samsung to build wind and solar farms that will generate 2,500 megawatts of power.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tomorrow's Metro

Relating
Sofi Papamarko on attending a low-key — and perfect — wedding.

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What's online today.

News Check out what people are saying about the Gi-ambrone scandal on Twitter at **metronews.ca/local**

Blogs TFC's Dwayne DeRosario joins It's Called Football to clear the air on his contract rumours

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TTC, union try to calm tensions

Two weeks after commuters began aiming cameras at the TTC's customer service, its management and union have launched separate fights to restore the system's reputation and dial back the angry rhetoric between riders and transit workers.

While union head Bob Kinnear lashed out at the public and the media for unfairly portraying transit workers as lazy and rude, TTC chief general manager Gary Webster took aim inside the organization.

"I still care. I'm still proud of the TTC, but the kind of things we're talking about have to stop," he told about 900 transit supervisors summoned to three meetings yesterday.

"We've allowed ourselves to shift to an environment that is unacceptable. All of us have to accept responsibility for allowing this to happen, me included," he said.

Webster said he became fed up on the weekend after another round of negative headlines. That prompted him to issue a memo to the TTC's 12,000 employees warning them that some of their behaviour is unacceptable.

The memo capped two weeks of published photos and videos showing transit workers sleeping on the job and taking unauthorized breaks.

Although there are all kinds of crews who don't have lunch breaks built into their shifts, there's a right and wrong way to take breaks, said Webster.

Assaults on transit workers have doubled from one or two a day to two or three in the last few weeks, he noted.

Town halls coming

- To try to ease the tension between riders and TTC workers, the union will stage a series of town hall meetings, said union head Bob Kinnear.

An angry Kinnear confirmed that the debacle is having a negative effect on workers. "We have heard from many operators who now fear taking a few minutes for a needed washroom break because they don't want to be subjected to ridicule or embarrassment," he told a news conference. "We want a better relationship with our customers because, frankly, it's hell out there right now."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Queen Station **Down the rabbit hole**

JOHN R. KENNEDY/METRO TORONTO

A woman walks through Queen Station under the watchful eye of Johnny Depp as the Mad Hatter. The subway station has been taken over by characters from Disney's 3D movie Alice in Wonderland, which opens March 5.

Fear for partner drove cop to shoot teen, inquest hears

DEATH The Toronto police officer who shot and killed a 15-year-old boy driving a stolen van created a dangerous situation by drawing his firearm in an attempt to stop the vehicle, the lawyer for the boy's mother told a coroner's inquest yesterday.

"You didn't think you might yell (at your partner) to get out of the way instead? You didn't think that?" Peter Rosenthal asked Const. Steve Darnley, the officer who shot Duane Christian on June 20, 2006.

Darnley maintained he believed the driver was going to use the van to run over his partner, Const. Rowena Edey, and the most effective way to protect her was to shoot the driver in the hope the vehicle would change course.

Duane Christian was shot dead by police as he sat in the driver's seat of a stolen van in the parking lot of a Scarborough high-rise apartment building shortly before 5 a.m. on June 20, 2006.

The province's Special Investigations Unit, a civilian agency that investigates incidents involving police that result in serious injury or death, cleared Darnley of any wrongdoing two months later, saying he was "legally justified" to shoot Christian "to prevent his partner from being deliberately run down."

Christian's family has launched a landmark $2 million negligence lawsuit against the SIU, alleging their investigation was fraught with problems. It is believed to be the first such lawsuit filed against the agency.

Many of their concerns were highlighted in Ombudsman André Marin's 2008 review of the SIU that accused the agency of having a bias toward police officers.

The inquest continues today with the resumption of Darnley's testimony.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Police seeking Jane Street murder victim's 'new friends'

Homicide detectives are looking for "new friends" of a Toronto man found shot dead outside a Jane Street home used as a marijuana grow-op. Police found the body of Glenn Lowe, 30, outside a home a block north of Trethewey Drive after several residents called 911 when they heard two gunshots about 11:15 p.m. Sunday. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

Premier to prorogue Ontario legislature until after Games

POLITICS Politicians will be heading back to work in the Ontario legislature next week as scheduled, Premier Dalton McGuinty said yesterday.

But he said he will prorogue the legislative session briefly before starting a new one after the Vancouver Olympics with a speech from throne.

"There will be a throne speech, but we will not follow the federal example of an extended break before we have that throne speech," McGuinty said at a solar panel testing facility near Brockville, Ont.

"That throne speech will likely come after the Olympics are over, just so you know."

He said there will be a "limited break" before the throne speech, which is required by law in order to start a new session.

"You can't introduce a throne speech unless you have a break," he said. "That's just the rule. But we will preserve every single one of our bills. Nothing will be lost."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Province's priorities

- The throne speech, which lays out the government's priorities, will include early learning and pension reform, the premier said.

Rejection of latest offer will lead to strike, colleges say

College faculty are being misled if they believe rejecting a final contract offer today won't lead to a strike affecting Ontario's 200,000 full-time students, said the colleges' bargaining team.

Chief negotiator Rachael Donovan dismissed union claims yesterday that a vote against the contract could lead to further negotiations. She said the colleges can't afford any more than what they've already offered and will not return to the bargaining table.

"If they reject the vote tomorrow, it means that faculty will be going on strike," Donovan said. "We've made it very, very clear that we will not have any further negotiations and we are not in favour of binding arbitration."

Head union negotiator Ted Montgomery said the Ontario Public Service Employees Union was still recommending the 9,000 community college teachers vote against what he calls " a terrible deal."

He said he's ready to go back to the bargaining table and enlist an arbitrator to settle the dispute if the vote is rejected by his membership today.

The union had set a strike deadline for Thursday, but moved it to Feb. 17 to allow for more talks should the offer be voted down.

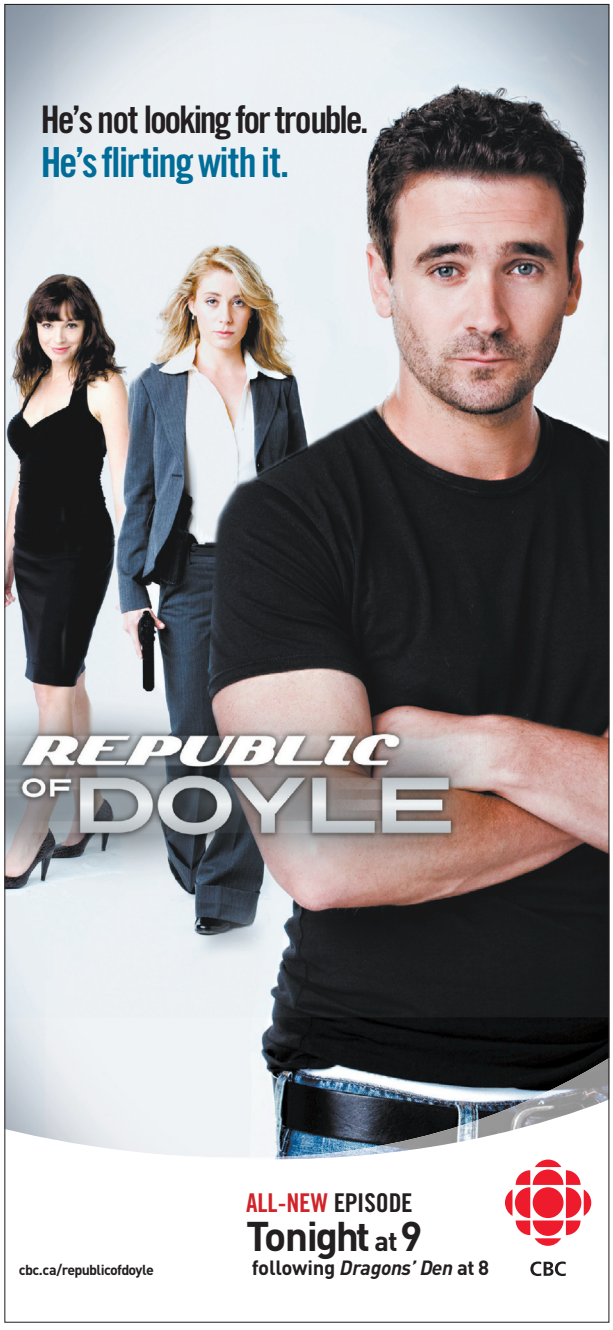
"The first thing we'll be doing after the rejection vote is contacting the mediator and say, 'Let's get together right away; let's meet all weekend — Valentine's Day, Family Day — let's keep working till we get a deal'," Montgomery said.

OPSEU rejected the proposed contract last month after college faculty members gave the union a 57 per cent strike mandate. But management asked that the contract be put to the teachers for a vote.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Issues at stake

- Key issues for the union are workload, academic freedom and management's decision in November to impose its offer on the teachers without a vote.



Sick Kids **Meet-and-greet**

LUCAS OLENIUK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Stephen Kmet, 16, chilled out with Chris Bosh in Marnie's Lounge at Toronto's Sick Kids Hospital yesterday afternoon. The entire team and the upbeat Raptor attended the hospital to sign autographs and pose for pictures with the kids.

Student activist-turned-lawyer suing police

LAW A student protester turned lawyer took his crusade against police wrongdoing to small-claims court yesterday, asking $25,000 in damages for injuries that include being labelled a neo-Nazi in an internal document.

Davin Charney, who is Jewish, also alleges he was wrongfully arrested and that police broke into his home. His housemates at the time collectively claim $10,000 in connection with the police entry.

Davin Charney

"Our law firm focuses on ... lawsuits against police and private security guards," says Charney, 35, on the website of his one-person Kitchener firm.

As a student activist, Charney was arrested at least 15 times but never criminally convicted. Now his specialty is taking police to small-claims court and he says he has won $15,000 in such suits for clients.

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Nicholson says government to appeal drug-injection site ruling

Justice Minister Rob Nicholson says the government will appeal a British Columbia court ruling that sanctioned Vancouver's supervised drug-injection site. Nicholson says the decision raises important questions about the division of powers between the federal and provincial governments. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Feds in talks to buy border bridge

Transport Canada confirmed it has held talks with the owner of the Ambassador Bridge, which spans the Detroit River to connect Windsor, Ont., with Detroit. But a spokesman for Transport Minister John Baird says no offer has been made to buy the bridge from Manuel (Matty) Moroun. The federal government has purchased 38 hectares of land from the city of Windsor, at a cost of $34 million, to help build a new six-lane bridge down river from the Ambassador. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Oda focused on long-term projects

Haiti Crisis

RELIEF EFFORT Canada's minister of international co-operation wants aid groups working in Haiti to prepare for the next phase of the relief effort: The rainy season.

At a meeting of the international Red Cross in Montreal, Bev Oda said yesterday that organizations will need to focus on longer-term reconstruction projects. THE CANADIAN PRESS

MORE COVERAGE, PG 8

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SCANLIFE

Will Canada actually 'own the podium' if it wins the most medals? It depends on who you ask. Scan this code for the story.

Williams was a rising star

Arrested colonel could have eventually commanded Air Force: Former boss

The air force colonel charged with two murders and two sexual assaults this week was "calm, hardworking and dedicated" and his former boss considered him one of the military's best and brightest.

Col. Russell Williams, 46, of Tweed, Ont., was arrested Sunday in Ottawa. He's been charged with first-degree murder in the deaths of two women and with the sexual assaults of two others.

Williams was "very intelligent, very mature, very calm, hardworking and dedicated — which is exactly why we selected him to be a wing commander," said retired lieutenant-general Angus Watt, the former air force chief who appointed Williams to his last military job.

"He had the potential to go far. He was selected both on his performance and his potential."

THE CANADIAN PRESS/HO - DND

Col. Russell Williams, right, lays a wreath at a Remembrance Day ceremony in Trenton, Ont. in this Nov. 11, 2009 National Defence handout photo.

Williams was amassing all the right stuff in his resumé to pave the way to bigger and better things, including Watt's old job.

He received a degree in economics and political science from the University of Toronto, and a master's in defence studies from Royal Military College.

He spent two years commanding 437 (Transport) Squadron in Trenton, including six months in 2005-06 as commanding officer of the military's secretive Camp Mirage, a logistics base on the Arabian Gulf that supplies the war effort in Afghanistan.

Williams was a flight instructor in Moose Jaw, served at Canadian Forces Base Shearwater in Nova Scotia and spent most of the 1990s in Ottawa, where he was a pilot to the prime minister and Governor General before Watt handed him command of the country's largest air force base, Canadian Forces Base Trenton in eastern Ontario.

This didn't pop up overnight, this job for him," Watt said in an interview yesterday. "He's been in the military for 23 years; we've watched him over the course of his career in a wide variety of jobs.

"He's been tested before and that is why he was selected."

Watt said he had no reason to believe Williams wouldn't ascend further up the military ladder. The next step would have been brigadier-general.

When asked if Williams had the potential to command the air force, Watt's response was an unequivocal "yes." THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLA resigns in N.S. spending scandal

POLITICS A member of the Nova Scotia legislature who became a central figure in a spending allowance scandal has resigned his seat.

The Conservative party says Richard Hurlburt resigned his seat for the riding of Yarmouth yesterday.

"Richard Hurlburt has served this province, and more importantly, the people of Yarmouth passionately over the past 10 years," interim Tory Leader Karen Casey said in a statement.

A report by the province's auditor general showed the former Conservative cabinet minister spent $7,995 to buy a generator and also charged taxpayers $2,499 for a 40-inch TV and $579 for installing it. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Olympics Torch run goes to U.S.

DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Torchbearer Rayne Williams, left, passes the Olympic flame to U.S. Olympic medalist Phil Mahre at the Peace Arch border crossing separating Canada and the United States in Surrey, B.C., yesterday. The Olympic flame entered the U.S. for the only time on it's 106-day journey across Canada.

Own The Podium seeks more funds

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

SPORTS The federal government says it will maintain its funding of Own The Podium beyond the 2010 Winter Olympics, but will not commit to spending more money on the program. Own The Podium is the $117-million, five-year strategy for Canada to win more medals than any other country at the Vancouver Olympics.

It was paid for with $66 million in taxpayer dollars. The Vancouver organizing committee, known as VANOC, covered most of the remainder with corporate sponsorship money.

Minister of State Gary Lunn says the federal government will continue to fund both summer and winter sport at $47 million per year. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Oilsands blaze breaks out in Alberta
A fire broke out around midnight Monday at one of Suncor Energy Inc.'s two oilsands upgraders north of Fort McMurray, Alta. — the second such incident in as many months. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Record deficit for Alberta

Alberta's Progressive Conservative government plans to run a record deficit and deplete its savings in a budget without the deep spending cuts that fiscal hawks have been screeching for.

The budget includes about $1.3 billion in cuts to many departments, but those savings are being redirected to key areas such as health and education instead of to the bottom line.

There are no tax increases, but up to 250 people could lose their jobs in the first government layoffs in more than a decade.

Finance Minister Ted Morton said he is not happy the budget includes a $4.7-billion deficit, but is confident his overall financial plan will help Alberta be back in the black by 2012.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Budget highlights

- Record deficit of $4.7 billion.
- 250 civil service layoffs in several departments.
- 5.6 per cent increase in operating expenses; largest increase for health care.
- 4.6 per cent increase for education, including larger grants to schools.
- $20 billion in new schools, roads and hospitals to be built over three years.

Stuck **Not the Bahamas**

THE CANADIAN PRESS/CLEMENT ALLARD

The Bahamian-flagged Algoma Discovery ran aground yesterday on the St. Lawrence River near Quebec City. The ship was expected to be freed by high tide later in the day.

Feds pull funding

EDUCATION Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl says when a province pulls funding for a university, that's a signal to Ottawa it might want to do the same.

The federal government says it won't renew about $7.3 million in funding to the First Nations University of Canada.

Strahl said yesterday his department has been frustrated for years by continuing concerns about governance and finances at the Regina-based university.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Deadly avalanche in Afghanistan

Avalanches roared down a mountain pass north of Afghanistan's capital, killing at least 28 people and leaving hundreds more stranded in their vehicles on snow-blocked roads, officials said yesterday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Michelle kicks off nutrition campaign

Michelle Obama launched a campaign yesterday to fight childhood obesity in the U.S., part of her effort to teach children about better nutrition and exercise. Obama said the Let's Move campaign will encourage more physical activity for children, healthier food in schools and more accurate food labelling. Some of her initiatives, such as tax breaks for grocery stores to move into poorly served communities, will require congressional action. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

AFGHANISTAN U.S. soldiers launched an operation yesterday in support of a planned U.S.-Afghan attack on the largest Taliban-controlled town in southern Afghanistan. About 400 U.S. troops as well as 250 Afghan soldiers and their 30 Canadian trainers moved into positions northeast of Marjah.

CHINA An activist who investigated the deaths of thousands of children crushed in their schools during the Sichuan earthquake was sentenced yesterday to five years, underscoring the government's determination to suppress questions about why the buildings fell. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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SCANLIFE

Fearful that Barack Obama's health care olive branch is a trap, Republican doubts may leave them vulnerable. Scan this code for the story.

Hospitals that charge will be cut off: UN

Haiti Crisis

The United Nations has warned that it will cut off shipments of free medicine beginning immediately to any Haitian hospitals that it finds are charging patients.

When the catastrophic earthquake struck Jan. 12, authorities immediately decided to make all medical care free. More than 200 international medical relief groups have sent in teams to help, and millions of dollars of donated medicine has been flown in.

UN officials told The Associated Press that about a dozen hospitals — both public and private — have begun charging patients for medicine. The officials said they could not immediately provide the names of the hospitals but said they were in several parts of the country, including Port-au-Prince.

UN workers and quake survivors were also keeping one eye on the sky. There's been no significant rain since the disaster, but everyone knows that won't last.

"We are going to have a big problem when the rainy season starts. We don't have $60 million for 100,000 tents."
Paul Antoine Bien-Aime

The rainy season in Haiti is deadly even in a good year. Now, in a devastated capital city, the early spring rains threaten to cause landslides and bring about health problems in the makeshift camps where more than 500,000 people are living.

"There will be health concerns," said engineer Mario Nicoleau of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Haiti's government said it needs more money or tents if people are to be moved.

"We are going to have a big problem when the rainy season starts," said Interior Minister Paul Antoine Bien-Aime. "We don't have $60 million to buy 100,000 tents." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

London **Pancakes to go**

OLI SCARFF/GETTY IMAGES

The BBC's Reeta Chakrabarti, left, leads the Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer during the annual Parliamentary Pancake Race in front of Britain's Houses of Parliament yesterday. The annual race between parliamentarians and journalists ahead of Shrove Tuesday was won this year by a team of MPs.

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Release of first genetically modified eggplant delayed
India halted the release of the first genetically modified eggplant Tuesday for further safety testing. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sri Lanka parliament dissolved for new vote

Sri Lanka's president dissolved parliament yesterday to make way for spring elections, a day after authorities arrested a key opposition leader, crippling the only serious threat to the ruling party's stifling grip on power.

FRANCA JAYAWARDENA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa at Independence Day celebrations in Kandy, Sri Lanka, last week.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa's decision follows his sweeping victory at the polls last month over his former army chief Gen. Sarath Fonseka, who had defected to the opposition after helping end the country's quarter-century civil war. Fonseka was arrested by the military on Monday on sedition charges.

Last month's presidential poll indicates the upcoming parliamentary contest will be another bitter race between the government and the opposition, which says it is being harassed and hounded. Human rights groups have echoed those accusations.

Rajapaksa's ruling coalition is hoping to secure a two-thirds majority in the legislature, giving them virtually unfettered control of this island nation. The poll will be held the first week in April. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington braces for second storm

STORM A second major snow storm in less than a week was blowing toward the Washington area yesterday, where federal government offices were closed for a second day.

Utility workers struggled to restore power to thousands of homes and businesses knocked out by the weekend blizzard that began on Friday and prevented some 230,000 federal workers from working.

The U.S. Senate met only for a few minutes Monday, and the House called off floor votes yesterday.

The second storm could leave as much as 50 centimetres of new snow in Washington by tonight. Crews scrambled to fix damaged power lines before the next storm hit. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Chile	2.9 ¢	Guatemala	10.9 ¢
China	2.9 ¢	Guyana	27.9 ¢
Ecuador	12.9 ¢	Honduras	15.9 ¢
El Salvador	9.9 ¢	Iraq	from 4.9 ¢
Jamaica	8.9 ¢	Israel	2.9 ¢
Jordan	3.9 ¢	Italy	2.9 ¢
Kenya	from 6.9 ¢	Russia	from 2.9 ¢
Kuwait	6.9 ¢	Saudi Arabia	from 3.9 ¢
Lebanon	9.9 ¢	South Korea	2.9 ¢
Libya	24.9 ¢	Sri Lanka	11.9 ¢
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Comment

5 reasons to suspend your 'belief'

TheWestView

With three days to go, the Olympic propaganda machine is popping more than a few bolts to get everyone to "Believe."

"Believe" means something like: Forget these Games are billions over budget and will put B.C. in a deep hole for generations. Concentrate instead on winning the gold medal in hockey, and make all the bad feelings go away.

Looking back, it's hard not to believe Vancouver would have been better off if the Games had gone to PyeongChang, South Korea, after all.

In honour of the Olympic rings, here are five reasons to believe in PyeongChang:

5 The Olympic mascots are endangered or non-existent species. Miga is a cross between an Orca and a Kermode bear, one threatened, the other rare; Sumi is a non-entity, Quatchi is a variation on the quasi-mythical Sasquatch, and Mukmuk, the only "real" animal in the menagerie (only a sidekick to boot), is a near-extinct Vancouver Island marmot. Somehow this says it all.

4 The Games will cost at least $6 billion. But, we're asked to believe, the net economic benefit of the Games will be $10 billion. If you believe that, would you like to buy one of these cute, cuddly Sasquatches? And speaking of legacies, what are we going to do with a $104.9 million toboggan slide?

3 The entire world now knows our dirty little secret: The best city on earth has one of the poorest neighbourhoods on earth — the Downtown East Side. Imagine what it would look like if we spent $6 billion on housing the homeless, treating the addicted and providing care for the kids.

2 Why hold the Winter Olympics where there's no winter? Vancouver is the warmest venue ever for the Winter Games, with an average February temperature of five degrees. So they're trucking in snow from the interior and dumping it on the daffodils of Cypress Bowl. What's wrong with this picture?

1 What does it avail a city to own the podium and lose its soul? Vancouver is a billion dollar police state: Surveillance cameras; dissenters turned away at the border in violation of the Charter of Rights. This is our home, and instead of "believing," we should spend a minute and actually think about what we've given up … and what we get in return.

Do you believe in Vancouver 2010? Share your views at: metronews.ca/the westview

Paul Sullivan is a Vancouver-based journalist and owner of Sullivan Media Consulting; vancouverletters@metronews.ca.

Word on the street: Do you think the Own the Podium program will result in Canada leading the Winter Olympic medal count for the first time?

Jeremy Stewart
Toronto
A: I'm gonna say no. I just don't really think it will. Maybe it will have more of an influence to win medals, but overall I don't think it will make an impact.

Pouyan Foroughi
Toronto
A: I hope so. I don't know if the amount of money you spend will actually get you results, but it would be a shame if it didn't.

Nina Tavakoli
Toronto
A: I don't know if they should be spending all this money when there are things going on in Haiti … Maybe it will make a difference, but … for what?

April Aylward
Halifax
A: I think we have an awesome chance of being first place. We have enough spirit at least that we should get it.

Alex Krewiak
Calgary
A: I think it's better than nothing, but we could be doing more to help out our athletes.

Noel Ramirez
Surrey
A:Yes definitely. They can just think about their sport when they don't have to work and support themselves.

MICHAEL DE ADDER

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Money manager triples its earnings

Higher performance fees boosted Integrated Asset Management Corp.'s first-quarter revenues and helped triple its earnings, the money manager said yesterday. The Toronto-based company booked net income of $1.6 million or six cents a share. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Investors feel EU will solve debt crisis

MARKETS The Toronto stock market closed sharply higher yesterday with investors growing convinced that European leaders will move by the end of the week to fix the debt crisis simmering in Greece.

"It all tells me the market is starting to price in the likelihood of either a bailout plan or a very strong understanding that, should Greece need financial assistance, the EU members will step in," said Matthew Strauss at RBC Capital Markets.

Debt

- Stock markets have lost ground over fears about unsustainable debt loads by some European countries, Spain, Portugal and Greece chief among them.

But some analysts had doubts about a bailout.

"It's difficult to believe that the Germans, who effectively are the people who fund the euro, are going to be willing to put their hands in their pockets, because the Greeks have been extremely undisciplined in their fiscal behaviour," said Gavin Graham, contributing editor for The Income Investor. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toyota issues 2 more recalls

Prius, Lexus hybrid repairs involve brake-related problems

The dent in Toyota's reputation deepened yesterday when the reeling auto giant announced two more recalls to eliminate the possibility of momentarily failing brakes in hybrids and leaking brake tubes in another model.

Toyota Canada said the company would conduct a voluntary safety recall on the 2010 flagship hybrid, the Prius, and the Lexus HS 250h sedan to "update" software in the anti-lock brake system so it would get rid of inconsistent brake feel that has alarmed some drivers.

Toyota also disclosed that it would launch a recall on some 2010 Camry models to inspect conditions that could trigger a brake fluid leak and increase stopping distances for motorists.

The company will send notices to the 3,582 owners of Prius and HS250h hybrids and 393 drivers of the early-production, four-cylinder Camry models for the free repairs and inspections.

Although the latest recalls don't involve a high number of cars, they mark the third and fourth time that Toyota has sent notices for repairs in less than three months.

The recalls now total 8.1 million vehicles internationally. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Reputation hit, but not fatal: Poll

- A Canadian Press-Harris Decima survey shows almost three in 10 Canadians would think twice about purchasing a Toyota following the worldwide recall over faulty gas pedals.
- But at the same time, 56 per cent still retain a positive impression of the Japanese automaker's products and 69 per cent believe the firm has done a good job of reacting to the problem.

Less beer, more profit at Molson Coors

BEER Three new beers and this weekend's Olympic launch of a new Molson Canadian ad campaign should help Molson Coors Brewing to begin offsetting a decade of deterioration, the company's chief executive said yesterday.

Instead of lowering prices, Peter Swinburn said Molson's strategy is to attract more sales by adding new brands. Last fall's introduction of M, Canadian 67 and Rickard's Dark has already helped to stem the economic downturn's impact on sales, he said.

The brewer earned $222.1 million US, or $1.19 per share in the quarter — up from $93.7 million in last year's fourth quarter.

Worldwide volume sold fell four per cent as people cut back on their purchases. Still, higher prices helped drive an 11 per cent rise in net sales to $820.8 million US, up from $739.2 million US a year ago. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sales in Canada

- Sales to retailers fell 1.2 per cent in the quarter, slightly better than the industry in Canada. Costs fell 3 per cent as prices to make and sell beer dropped. Coors Light grew, but Molson Canadian, Dry and Export brands fell.

PAUL SAKUMA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Molson Coors, maker of Coors Light beer, said yesterday its fourth-quarter profit more than doubled because of favourable tax benefits even as it sold fewer beers.

Google cuts fee to break contract

PHONES Google Inc. is shaving $200 US off the fee that it charges customers of its new Nexus One phone to break a service contract with T-Mobile, as U.S. regulators continue to probe such fees and the rationale for them.

Google's "equipment recovery fee" applies to customers who break their two-year T-Mobile contract after a 14-day trial period and before 120 days. A $350 US fee that applied to new T-Mobile customers was lowered to $150, while a $250 fee for those upgrading to the Nexus One was cut to $50. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bassett Media drops acquisitions

MEDIA Bassett Media Group Corp. has cancelled plans for two previously announced acquisitions.

The Toronto-based advertising display company said yesterday that it has nixed agreements to buy both Sidetrack Technologies Inc. — the operator of full-motion advertising displays used in subway systems — and Haizou Media Corp. — operator of advertising display screens in China — after determining that neither was a strategic fit with its operations. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Business in brief

MINING Inmet Mining Corp. reported yesterday an $89.8-million profit in the fourth quarter, a turnaround from the $32.5-million loss that the Toronto-based metals producer had a year earlier. The company — primarily involved in copper, but also produces zinc and gold — owns or has majority interests in mines in Turkey, Spain, Finland and northwestern Quebec. It also has a minority interest in a copper and gold mine in Papua New Guinea. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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By the numbers
According to the 20th annual RBC RRSP poll, half of Canadians (54 per cent) expect their pensions — whether a pension from an employer (29 per cent) or a government pension (25 per cent) — to be the single, largest source of income in retirement. METRO NEWS SERVICES

RRSP Guide

Don't forget
The deadline for making contributions to your Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) for the 2009 tax year is March 1, 2010. That means you only have 19 days left!

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

What's your investing strategy?

Consider age, marital status when deciding on financial goals, experts suggest

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Smart investing is crucial at any age and marital status, though your goals and strategies are going to be different along the way.

Tom Hamza, president of the Investor Education Fund, says for most people age is an important indicator of where their financial goals are aimed and you'll want to increase the number of income-generating investments you hold as you get older.

"There are life stages and your investment portfolio should always match the stage of life you're in. A great rule of thumb is that the fixed-income part of your portfolio should equal your age — that's something that should consistently change," he said.

Young investors should pay off their debts first in order to free up income for investing, while older ones should focus on protecting their capital.

"For young people, if you have outstanding debts like student loans or credit card debt, tackle those first. Make sure your house is in order first, then focus on paying ahead. As you get older, you'll want to reduce risk and have more sources of reliable income," Hamza said.

Your portfolio should match the life stage you're in, experts say.

Christine Van Cauwenberghe, director of tax and estate planning at Investors Group, says seniors and retirees need to take special care to navigate the tax system because maximizing the use of their saved money is paramount at that stage in their lives. Seniors should speak with an investment adviser to figure out how to arrange their financial situation to make sure they pay as little tax as possible while still drawing a comfortable income.

"For seniors, it's very important to minimize your net income. If you just rearrange a few things, you can often save a lot of money," Van Cauwenberghe said.

For couples, Van Cauwenberghe says marriage or a common-law situation can offer a wealth of investment boosts, such as pension income splitting and spousal RRSPs, but it can also create new challenges so make sure you speak with an expert.

Hamza says for couples where one person earns significantly more than the other, options exist to split income away from the higher earner to the lower one, lowering taxes in the process.

"You want to make sure the higher income earner pays fewer taxes," he said.

No matter what your age or marital status, however, don't treat your tax return as a spending bonus — if possible, reinvest it instead.

"For many people, it will make sense to take that tax return and apply it to other investments to get more bang for your buck — don't just use it as spending money," Hamza said.

Next week's lineup

SPOUSAL RRSPS For advice from the experts on how to make the most of your spousal RRSP, pick up Metro's next RRSP Guide on Feb. 17.

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* Conditions apply. Please read the Terms & Conditions. Annual interest rate effective as of February 1, 2010. Rate subject to change at any time. Interest is calculated daily on your closing principal balance, reported monthly and paid to your account on June 30th and December 31st each year. We reserve the right to extend or cancel the offer at any time.

By the numbers

According to the 20th annual RBC RRSP poll, 68 per cent of Canadians feel having enough money for a comfortable retirement is the most important consideration when retiring. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Borrowing to invest an option

ROBYN YOUNG
for Metro Canada

One way to maximize your RRSP contributions is to get an RRSP loan — but this option may not be for everyone, experts warn.

One way to maximize your RRSP contributions is to get an RRSP loan, but professionals in the industry warn this is not for everyone.

"It all depends on your tax rate, your expected rate of return and how fast you're going to pay off the loan," said Jamie Golombek, CIBC's managing director of tax and estate planning.

When you borrow to put money into an RRSP, the interest on the loan is not tax deductible, so it can become quite expensive, he said.

You may end up paying more interest to the loan than you'll make on the RRSP, especially if it's in a daily interest account or GIC.

"But if you have a higher rate of return (on the RRSP), then it may make some sense," he said.

Kevin Cork, certified financial planner based in Calgary, says if you're considering a loan to contribute, think about your saving style.

"For some people, getting an RRSP loan isn't really the ideal system because there's always going to be debt to the loan," he said.

For others, who are better at paying down debt than saving, it's a viable option.

It's all about carrots and sticks, he said.

"They need that stick of the fact that they owe this money," he said.

If you decide to get a loan to contribute, Susan Howe, regional financial planning consultant with RBC, says go for a line of credit or apply for an RRSP loan, which is specifically designed for contributing to your RRSP and will likely have favourable interest rate terms.

Whichever way you decide to go, Howe said it's imperative to ensure you have the means to carry the loan debt.

"The key is that you have to have the available cash flow to support those payments."
Susan Howe, RBC

"The key is that you have to have the available cashflow to support those payments in view of whatever else might be going on in your financial picture," she said.

Alim Dhanji, certified financial planner with Assante Financial Management in Vancouver, recommends anyone considering borrowing to contribute to their RRSP proceed with caution.

"If you can pay the loan back right away, then I am OK with it," he said. "Otherwise, I generally don't like people getting behind and always borrowing to catch up."

Rather than paying off debt, Dhanji recommends setting up monthly contributions to an RRSP because it creates good habits.

Should I stay the course with my RSP?

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Bracing for a tough sell

'Tis the season to contribute to registered retirement savings plans, but some banks are bracing for a tough sell this year.

Stock markets have recovered since hitting bottom last March, but the economy remains feeble. Of particular concern, the unemployment rate has risen over the past year.

As a result, many Canadians may not have the money to make an RRSP contribution before the March 1 deadline. Among those that do, there is lingering nervousness about jumping back into the market or locking up cash in registered accounts.

Banks, though, have a lot riding on this RRSP season after contributions fell in 2008.

They have poured millions into beefing up wealth management businesses in recent years, and retirement planning remains the bread and butter of those operations. That's prompted some to use strategies this year to ensure RRSP sales don't fall flat.

"The big consumer insight to understand is there's an internal conflict that people are going through right now," said Caroline Dabu, head of marketing for Bank of Montreal's wealth management group.

"If you've lost 10, 20, 30 per cent of your portfolio, you're conflicted and you're divided about whether you should hang back and be cautious about your money, or get back into the market and be bold to make up those losses."

Even younger clients are skittish because the economic recovery is not robust, she said.

Consequently, investors are sitting on large sums of cash. Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce estimates that Canadians have a whopping $120 billion sitting on the sidelines.

There is also "an astonishing amount" of unused RRSP contribution room.

In 2007, $34 billion of RSP contributions were made compared with $560 billion of unused RRSP carry forward room.

Accordingly, banks spend months strategizing their RRSP campaigns.

In order to whet the appetite of clients, BMO has launched a microsite on investing. It allows customers to determine their investor profile, while accessing customized information. The Bank of Nova Scotia is using a $10,000 RRSP giveaway to entice interest. In order to qualify, clients must go into a branch and have a no-obligation chat with a sales officer. Two weekly winners will be named until March 1. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Investing tip
Diversify: Putting your money in a variety of investments provides exposure to a wider range of opportunities and limits the negative effects of a downturn in one market or asset category. NEWS CANADA

Female and younger investors will lead the way as significant contributors to RRSPs, according to a CIBC World Markets report.

Canadians moving back to RRSPs: Report

Canadian investors will likely return to RRSPs this year after fleeing the retirement investment vehicle during the recession, according to a report from CIBC World Markets.

The report, issued on Monday, said that female and younger investors will lead the way as significant contributors, though it didn't provide any specific growth targets.

Last year, the number of Canadians who made contributions to RRSPs fell by 1.8 per cent, and even those who made an investment decreased their average contribution by 0.4 per cent, the report said.

The combined 2.2 per cent decline in total contributions marked the largest drop in contributions in six years.

CIBC senior economist Benjamin Tal said the improvement in stock markets over the past year has helped some Canadians regain their confidence.

"Investors are already testing the waters, with total net purchases of mutual funds rising for three consecutive months," he wrote in the report.

"And the lack of good investment alternatives in a world of low interest rates makes the decision to dive back into the stock market that much easier."

Tal noted, however, that markets have shown some softness in recent months, which might cause investors to pause before making any major financial decisions. But the latest turbulence has been far less volatile than in the past, which will help quash some of their concerns, he added.

RRSPs are a tax deductible way to save for retirement. Investors have until March 1 to contribute

"The savings rate in Canada has risen notably during the recession."
Benjamin Tal, CIBC

up to 18 per cent of the income.

Tal said the disposable income of the average Canadian has risen by almost 3.5 per cent at an annual rate since last September.

"For the first time in many years, this extra cash is being saved not spent," he said.

"The savings rate in Canada has risen notably during the recession and, at just under 5 per cent, it is currently at a nine-year high. This means that Canadian households now sit on over $17 billion more in savings compared to the same period last year."

Tal also highlighted that a lack of confidence in both government and corporate pension plans has convinced some Canadians to look elsewhere for their financial future.

"If they have the means to do so, younger Canadians are more inclined to contribute to RRSPs than their older counterparts," he said.

Part of this has to do with "their cynical view of the sustainability or relevance of the Canada (and) Quebec pension plans, as well as the role employer-sponsored pension plans will play in their retirement."

A separate survey from Royal Bank late last year indicated that just 35 per cent of Canadians had contributed to an RRSP for the 2009 tax year — the lowest percentage of contributors since 1996.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Common errors avoidable

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

With the pressure mounting to sock away money in an RRSP, people run the risk of making common errors in self-directed accounts, experts say.

Jason Schella, the Bank of Montreal's regional sales manager for Atlantic Canada, says the most common mistake is investing without an overall financial plan.

"How can I do the right investing if I don't know exactly where I have to get to?" he says when reached by cellphone en route from Fredericton to Halifax. Identify your financial destination before plotting the map, he urges.

A second error is buying high and selling low — the opposite of what you'd want to do. When a stock is hot, people snatch it up. When it's falling, they drop it. A savvy investor will plug wax in his ears and ignore the siren song of hot or cold tips.

"Time in the market is more important than timing the market," Schella advises.

One common mistake is investing without an overall financial plan, experts say. It's difficult to grow your money if you don't have goals in mind.

"Time in the market is more important than timing the market." Jason Schella, BMO

In the land of Earl Jones Ponzi schemes, Schella says it's safest to stick with big-name financial institutions if you use a financial adviser.

"(The bank) is still going to be there, even if one of the individuals wants to go to the Caribbean," he jokes.

David Shymko, an investment counsellor at Vancouver's Macdonald, Shymko & Company, says a common mistake is investing for too long a term in government or corporate bonds.

"If there's an expectation for inflation, those bonds will go down in value," Shymko says. "There is capital risk associated with investing too long when the expectation of interest is rising."

If you're going to go with speculative stocks, hold them personally, not in your RRSP. They regularly fluctuate and when you have a loss in an RRSP, it's forever, he says.

"There's no way you can get any tax savings for a capital loss in an RRSP."

Another problem he sees is people opening too many accounts as they chase the best deal each year.

"They get this whole mishmash of accounts and they're often paying an annual fee for each account," Shymko explains. Consolidate to one or two accounts.

Some people even wind up with too large an RRSP. Because the tax-shielded money has to come out eventually, investors may find themselves "stuck in the highest tax rate forever."

Keep an eye on your final financial destination to avoid that.

Finally, Shymko warns RRSPs aren't the best plan for everyone. Workers in a low tax bracket may do better with a tax-free savings account (TFSA).

Should I chart a new course with my RSP?

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Portfolio tip

Consolidate your investments. If you do not want to spend a great deal of time managing several plans, you may want to consolidate your investments into one portfolio and get one consolidated statement to track your plan. NEWS CANADA

Cashing out early not ideal, experts warn

ROBYN YOUNG
for Metro Canada

If you're strapped for cash, withdrawing from your RRSPs should be your last resort, financial experts advise.

If you're strapped for cash and don't know where to turn, withdrawing from your RRSPs should be the last resort.

"This would be similar to cashing in a pension plan early; you are really affecting your future ability to take care of yourself," said Kevin MacLeod, certified financial planner and president of MoneyAdvisor.ca Financial Ltd.

Jeff Young, senior manager of financial planning support for RBC, says a lot of people don't understand the power of the long-term compounded interest on an RRSP.

And there are a number of penalties that accompany cashing out those funds before retirement.

"Upon immediate withdrawal, there will be a withholding tax," he said.

The institution housing your RRSP is required by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to withhold a certain percentage of the money withdrawn: 10 per cent for any amount up to $5,000; 20 per cent for amounts between $5,001 and $15,000; and 30 per cent for any amount over $15,000.

Young said some financial advisers may suggest clients withdraw funds in $5,000 chunks to avoid the higher withholding tax, but this method is not the way to go.

"The CRA has come out explicitly and stated that they don't support that approach," he said.

"Some institutions may not even do it."

After the withholding tax, the sum withdrawn is taxed at the individual's taxation rate; it's added to whatever other income accumulated that year.

There is no way to avoid the tax payable on an RRSP — all you can do is defer it, said MacLeod.

"When you file your income taxes the following year, the entire amount of your withdrawal is included in your income," he said. "At that point, you either pay the additional tax you owe or collect a refund if what was withheld was too much."

Finally, if you have no other option but to withdraw from your RRSPs, Young says you should think long and hard about it first.

"Think about, 'How much do I need?', and don't take out any more than that," he said.

It might make more sense to look at the root of the problem, he said. How did you end up in a situation where you need to consider your last resort?

"There could be a bigger problem there," he said. "Don't avoid it."

When it's worth it

There are a few situations where cashing out your RRSPs can make sense:

- If you're thinking about going back to school, consider the Lifelong Learning Plan. This will enable you to withdraw up to $20,000 from your RRSPs without being taxed — as long as the money is repaid within 10 years.
- The First Time Homebuyer's Plan allows a withdrawal of up to $25,000, tax free, from an RRSP for a down-payment on a first home with a repayment period of 15 years.

Options abound for those looking to save money

Just as the recession has put a squeeze on your finances, there are more choices than ever when it comes to investing.

RRSP time is here, but you could also put your money into a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA). And don't forget the RESP so that you can save for your children's education.

With so many options, how do you decide what to do with your money?

Financial planning experts say the first thing you need to do is consider your goals. Then turn your attention to the different types of investment accounts you can use.

"The biggest piece of advice for people this year is, wherever possible, maximize the different types of plans that you use. Don't just do the TFSA and that's it. Don't just make an RRSP contribution and spend the refund," said Tina Di Vito, director of retirement strategies for BMO Financial Group.

"The way I look at all these plans is, 'What are you trying to achieve and how much money do you have?' and then we can figure out how best to manage it."

Financial planning experts say those who have young children and are saving for their education need to make an RESP a priority.

A registered education savings plan allows you to save up to $50,000 for your child's education. Contributions are not tax-deductible, but income and capital gains are tax-deferred until the money is withdrawn.

The Canada Education Savings Grant pays 20 per cent annually on the first $2,500 of yearly contributions to children under the age of 17. The works out to $500 a year and a lifetime maximum of $7,200.

It's the Canada Education Savings Grant that makes this investment such a good prospect.

"You want to take advantage of the RESP because the grants the government gives you are so fantastic. That's basically free money," Di Vito said.

For many Canadians, the big question is whether to contribute to a TFSA or an RRSP.

Canadians over the age of 18 are eligible to save $5,000 per year in a TFSA. The contributions are not tax-deductible, but investment income earned in the account is tax-free. Withdrawals from the account — for any reason and at any time — are also tax-free. Unused contribution room can be carried forward and accumulate for years to come.

By contrast, RRSP contributions are tax deductible. Investment income grows tax-free until retirement. But if you need to take money out any time prior to that, you'll pay a withholding tax and report the withdrawal on your income tax return.

Withdrawals are tax exempt only if you're taking out the money to help with the down payment on your first home or if it's to go back to school.

If you are in a high tax bracket now and think you will be in a lower bracket when you retire, the RRSP offers distinct benefits. That's because, depending on your income level, your contribution could fetch you a refund on your personal income taxes.

"Taking a $5,000 amount and putting it in your RRSP if you have room means you may get $2,000 back. Not only do you have $5,000 invested but now you have another $2,000," Di Vito said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Man City climb into fifth place
Carlos Tevez and Emmanuel Adebayor scored to give Manchester City a 2-0 win over Bolton last night that moved the team up to fifth place in the Premier League. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports

Peppers cools on long-term deal

Julius Peppers, left, no longer wants a long-term contract with Carolina, saying the Panthers have ignored him this off-season. In an interview aired yesterday morning on Charlotte radio station WFNZ-AM, the five-time Pro Bowl defensive end indicated he's irritated by the team's "silence" and has changed his stance on whether he wants to continue his career in Carolina. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

Argos get new coach, owner

Barker back for second stint

As he took his seat at the podium to begin his second stint as head coach of the Toronto Argonauts, Jim Barker had something to say about how his first stint had come to an end. He was never fired, he said, at least not in as many words.

It was a decade ago, and the team had changed owners, having been bought by New York insurance magnate Sherwood Schwarz. Barker arrived for work at the team's suburban practice facility one day, only to discover all the doors had been locked, and that he suddenly had no way of opening them.

"I never got fired," Barker said with a smile. "I just went in and my key didn't work."

He was officially welcomed back at a news conference held yesterday, reclaiming the job as the Argos were in the middle of preparing for another ownership change. Barker, the team's fourth coach in the last two years, was received on the podium by general manager Adam Rita and team president Bob Nicholson.

David Cynamon and Howard Sokolowski, who had made a habit of attending most major news conferences since they bought the team seven years ago, were not in the room. Their absence did not seem to bother Barker, who said the uncertainty did not impact his decision to re-join the team.

"I wouldn't go into a situation where I didn't have confidence and trust," Barker said. "You're either going to trust the people that you work for, or you don't. I have a tremendous amount of trust in Bob Nicholson and Adam Rita. And whatever happens with the ownership situation, I know I have those two right here."

Within hours, it was announced Cynamon and Sokolowski had sold the team to B.C. Lions owner David Braley. The Toronto businessmen had been weighing their options, with one of their frustrations being that their attempts to develop a revenue-sharing program had been rebuffed by the CFL's board of governors.

DARREN CALABRESE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Newly hired Toronto Argonauts head coach Jim Barker sits alone while doing a phone interview following a press conference announcing his appointment in Toronto yesterday.

The uncertainty slowed the pace of the franchise's day-to-day business, and the delay in settling the football operations side of the organization has left some veteran players frustrated. It is not clear how many assistant coaches will be retained, though Nicholson did make a point of announcing Rita would remain in place as general manager.

The Argos finished last in the East Division with a 3-15 record last season, the team's worst finish in more than 15 years. Toronto has lost 23 of 26 games since firing former head coach Rich Stubler 10 games into his rookie season, in 2008.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Funeral mass held for Brendan Burke, son of Toronto Maple Leafs GM

REMEMBERED Brendan Burke, the son of Toronto Maple Leafs general manager Brian Burke and an advocate for gay rights, was remembered yesterday for his compassion and courage, four days after his death in a car crash on a snowy Indiana road.

"From birth, he had an unshakable faith in the genuine good that resides in all people," his brother Patrick said at a funeral mass in Canton, Mass.

"Along with that faith is hope, hope that he could bring that good out from inside of people and into the world by being open, caring and kind to everyone he met."

Brendan Burke was a goalie at Xaverian Brothers High School in nearby Westwood, but decided not to play as a senior because the locker room atmosphere was becoming harder to deal with, according to an article on ESPN.com in December.

That article related how he told his father on Dec. 30, 2007, that he was gay.

"I had a million good reasons to love and admire Brendan," Brian Burke said in the story.

"This news didn't alter any of them."

Brendan, 21, was in the second semester of his senior year at Miami University in Ohio, where he was student manager of the hockey team.

He died Friday when his car slid sideways into the path of another vehicle. His friend, Mark Reedy, 18, of Bloomfield Hills, Mich., also died in the accident.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports in brief

AHL Pro hockey will return to Oklahoma City starting next season. Representatives of Prodigal Hockey LLC and the NHL's Edmonton Oilers said yesterday that Oklahoma City will be the home of the Oilers' American Hockey League franchise, which has been dormant since 2005.

SOCCER Edmonton has been awarded a franchise in the North American Soccer League. FC Edmonton will begin play in the 2011 season.

BASKETBALL The Harlem Globetrotters have found a new way to beat the Washington Generals — on ice. The famed basketball barnstormers wore ice cleats and hockey helmets as they played on a hockey rink for the first time in their 84-year history yesterday, putting on a show in New York's Central Park by winning 32-15.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Carolina 4 Florida 1
N.Y. Islanders 4 Nashville 3 (SO)
Boston at Buffalo
Calgary at Ottawa
Vancouver at Tampa Bay
Detroit at St. Louis
Dallas at Chicago

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Charlotte 94 Washington 92
Chicago 109 Indiana 101
Cleveland 104 New Jersey 97
Philadelphia 119 Minnesota 97
Houston at Miami
Sacramento at New York
Detroit at Milwaukee
Atlanta at Memphis
Dallas at Denver
Oklahoma City at Portland
Utah at L.A. Clippers

McEnroe gives Federer huge endorsement

John McEnroe believes Roger Federer is the best men's tennis player of all time. Also considered one of the greatest ever players, the American told reporters yesterday he ranked the Swiss star as even better than Rod Laver, the only man to win all four Grand Slams in one year, and seven-time Wimbledon champion Pete Sampras. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports in brief

NHL A record six teams will open the 2010-11 NHL regular season with games in Europe, the league and NHL Players' Association announced yesterday. The Carolina Hurricanes and Minnesota Wild will open the campaign in Helsinki, Finland on Oct. 7, and then meet there again Oct. 8. The Columbus Blue Jackets and San Jose Sharks play two games in Stockholm, Sweden, on Oct. 8-9 while the Boston Bruins and Phoenix Coyotes will square off in Prague, Czech Republic on Oct. 9-10.

NHL The Carolina Hurricanes activated Finnish forward Tuomo Ruutu from injured reserve yesterday. Ruutu had missed 15 games since sustaining an upper-body injury in a fight with Colorado's Darcy Tucker on Jan. 8.

MLB Speedy outfielder Willy Taveras has been released by the Oakland Athletics, eight days after he was acquired from Cincinnati with infielder Adam Rosales for infielder Aaron Miles and a player to be named.

NBA San Antonio Spurs guard George Hill is apologizing for nude pictures of himself that were recently posted online. In a statement issued by the team yesterday, Hill said: "A year ago I made a mistake and take full responsibility for my actions. I have matured and learned from this episode."

CHARGES St. Louis Rams running back Steven Jackson won't face criminal charges over allegations that he beat a girlfriend who was nine months pregnant with the couple's child at his Las Vegas home last year, a police spokeswoman said yesterday.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Talent flourishes over time

It's unrealistic to expect quick results from Toronto's prosects

TheHockeyNews

Adam Proteau

thehockeynews.com

With 22 games remaining in the regular season and the two-week Olympic break looming large, the Toronto Maple Leafs have some time for reflection on where they are as a franchise.

If they're honest with themselves, Leafs brass knows that, while the organization continues to make short, slow strides toward consistent competitiveness, there will be more than a few gruesome evenings such as their 3-0 blown lead (and subsequent 4-3 loss) in New Jersey last Friday.

Mixed in with that sobering reality will be stretches where the Leafs provide their fans with some genuine hope. People will see, for example, Tyler Bozak or Carl Gunnarsson meeting or rising above expectations and they'll imagine such feats can be reproduced each and every night.

That isn't the way it works when an NHL franchise is breaking in a new generation of core players. Look at the Vancouver Canucks — and their star forwards Henrik and Daniel Sedin — for an example.

Henrik Sedin, in particular, was drafted (along with his twin Daniel) with much fanfare in 1999. He was thought to be more playmaker than goal-scorer and his stats — he didn't have his first 20-goal campaign until last season and amassed at least 60 assists in each of the last three years — underscored that belief.

But this season, Henrik has elevated his play to the point he is a genuine candidate to win the league's Hart Trophy as its most valuable player. He already has a career-best 25 goals, and through Vancouver's first 57 games, he was just five points shy of establishing a new high in points.

Let that time frame sink in for a moment. It took a young NHLer with exceptional talent a full decade to realize his potential. Does that make you think a 19-year-old Leafs prospect such as Nazem Kadri will step in next season and assert himself as an impact player?

It certainly shouldn't. That's why you Leafs grasshoppers need patience — and lots of it — to make it through the tumult and intermittent triumphs that will lie ahead for a long time to come.

DAVID COOPER/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Leafs prospect Nazem Kadri made his NHL debut against the Sharks on Monday.

The Hockey News thn.com

New Habs GM sends positive message to Plekanec

NHL The Montreal Canadiens are still dealing with the surprise of hearing their general manager was stepping down, but one of their key players was pleased with the message sent by the man taking his place.

New GM Pierre Gauthier announced in his first press conference Monday that a dialogue had been opened with the Habs' leading scorer Tomas Plekanec, an impending unrestricted free agent.

A day later, Plekanec said it was comforting news when his agent Rick Curran informed him that a conversation had taken place with Gauthier.

"That's nice to know that they talked, they had a one-on-one phone call and talked about what our position is and what their position is," Plekanec said after practice yesterday.

Plekanec was clear, however, that it did not mean the Canadiens had entered into negotiations with him.

"I don't think they have really started yet," he said. "It was just one phone call. So we'll see."

Plekanec was 18th in the NHL in points entering last night's games, with 15 goals and 43 assists. If he were allowed to hit the open market, Plekanec would likely at least double his $2.75-million US salary. But he says he would rather not go down that road.

"If we can agree on everything, I would be more than happy to stay here and play for the Montreal Canadiens," he said. "I love it here, it's my second home. I don't see myself right now playing somewhere else."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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2. Jonathon Gremsperger	BC, CA	840	357	491	848
3. Shawn Tschritter	AB, CA	838	345	497	842
4. Christian Gagnon	NB, CA	795	341	495	836
5. Stephanie Warren	NS, CA	818	349	480	829
6. Joanne Doiron	NB, CA	793	335	490	825
6.Kyle Turk	NS, CA	845	356	469	825
8. Bernie Horton	ON, CA	783	342	476	818
8. Grant Greenfield	AB, CA	807	367	451	818
10. Jean-Paul Osborne	QC, CA	833	333	483	816
10. Steve Ferguson	ON, CA	827	342	474	816
12. Jordan Camponi	AB, CA	796	326	489	815
13. Blaine Schlechter	AB, CA	806	332	479	811
14. Paula Almeida-Stille		829	341	469	810
14. Stephen Stille	ON, CA	829	341	469	810

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Cash offered for luge gold
Fast Track Group has offered a $1-million prize to any Canadian luger who wins a gold medal at the Winter Olympics. The prize would be split between the athlete and the Canadian Luge Association. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver Games

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

Boot camp put team to the test

Canadian women spent 24 grueling days in Dawson Creek, B.C., last spring

Carla MacLeod's eyes filled with tears at the thought of one more session in the weight room. Beckie Kellar had to overcome her fear of bears. Jayna Hefford thought "What am I doing here?"

Whatever the Olympic Games throw at the Canadian women's hockey team now that they've arrived in Vancouver, nothing will be harder than the month they spent together near Dawson Creek, B.C., last spring.

Boot camp, as it is not-so-fondly called, tested the women physically and mentally for 24 days in May and June. In the process, they pushed past their limits and helped their teammates get past theirs.

When the players reconvened in Calgary in August to begin full-time training, they already had a strong base of trust and fitness to build on.

"They learned how to work through a lot of different things and things we might still be working through right now had we not done that," head coach Melody Davidson says.

Days that started at 7 a.m. and ended at 9 p.m. laid the foundation for physical and mental toughness that the players must draw on now that their final and biggest test is upon them. The Canadian women open the Olympic tournament Saturday against Slovakia at Thunderbird Arena.

Running, rock climbing, kickboxing, yoga, weight sessions, triathlons, in addition to on-ice drills, kept the Canadian women on the go from morning until night. Toward the end of boot camp, they rode their bikes 35 kilometres into the mountains, hiked up one and back down before making the return trip on their bikes.

"It's neat as a person to see how far you can go and how do you react when you are in your low of lows."
Carla MacLeod

Exhaustion would eventually hit. The players had to find reserves they didn't think they had to continue. They also learned to recognize when teammates were struggling and what help they needed.

"We call it hitting the wall. You just bonked," MacLeod says. "In the 30 days, I probably hit a wall three different times, where I just wondered 'what is going on? This is crazy.'

"I think that's why it is such great team bonding. All of that's important. It's testing your limits. It's neat as a person to see how far you can go and how do you react when you are in your low of lows. Do you yell? Or do you retreat?"

Boot camp has become standard for Canada's Olympic women's hockey teams since they held one in Valcartier, Que., prior to the 2002 Games.

Carla MacLeod

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Family Day at Casa Loma

Learn archery at Casa Loma on Monday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The Family Archery Workshop, $31, is suitable for beginners. To register, call 416-923-1171, ext. 205 or ext. 215. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Family Fun

Carnival on the Waterfront

The Waterfront hosts a Family Day celebration and carnival on Monday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Features include dog shows, skating, crafts, ice castles, live music, snacks, and more. Call 416-596-9821 for more. METRO NEWS SERVICES

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

COURTESY OF KIDS-FEST

Kids-Fest, which takes place this weekend, is Canada's largest indoor inflatable playground.

An 'extreme' playground

KEITH CARMAN
for Metro Toronto

For some, Family Day offers a moment of reflection on familial relationships right around the time of "the other" love-themed occasion.

Those without offspring see it as a wonderful government-sanctioned day off and virtually everyone cherishes the way it's a slight reprieve from the lack of special events between Christmas and Easter. Still, with one more day out of the classroom, a lot of kids are going to be bouncing off the walls this weekend.

So let them, says Gina Downes, creator of Kids-Fest. Entering its fourth consecutive year of operation, it has quickly become Canada's largest indoor inflatable show/playground. Running for the entire weekend — Feb. 13-15 at Toronto's International Centre (6900 Airport Rd., Mississauga) — Kids-Fest is directed at letting rug-rats of all ages burn off that extra energy.

"As a mother of three children, I saw how much they enjoyed indoor playgrounds," Downes says, explaining Kids-Fest's origins.

"Having been in the special events industry for the past 15 years, we decided to take the concept of an indoor playground to the extreme. We wanted to have a place where families could come and spend the day with their children on the rides and enjoy something that you just can't get anywhere else."

While Kids-Fest originated and continues to operate out of Hamilton's Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum (9280 Airport Rd.) each Family Day, thanks to its exponential growth in popularity annually, Downes has been prompted to expand Kids-Fest into Toronto for 2010.

Still, each location features its own unique atmosphere and enticements. The International Centre is scheduled to house more than 50,000 square feet of the continent's biggest scream-inducing inflatable activities, some reaching upwards of 25 feet and/or 135 feet long.

At that, listing off the various features of the Toronto Kids-Fest seems like an endless host of sugarplum dreams. From obstacle courses, bouncers, laser tag and bull riding to vendors, multiple Free-Flight Birds of Prey Shows, appearances by award-winning interactive entertainer D-Jay and Party Animal, premium offerings such as pony rides, face painting and the Make-It and Take-It Teddy Bear Workshop, it's tough to deny that Downes has met her goal of original, captivating entertainment for children of all ages.

If you want to go...

- Admission to Kids-Fest is $8, and free for children two and under. All-day ride bracelets are $15, and pony ride tickets are $5. Adults do not need a ride bracelet to go on rides with their child. Tickets available at The International Centre. Parking is free.
- Kids-Fest is open from noon to 7 p.m. on Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Monday.

events

VALENTINE'S & FAMILY DAY AT THE TORONTO ZOO Enjoy interactive exhibits, create some crafts, and more. Children who bring a Valentine for their favourite animal get in free. Feb. 12-15, from 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Go to torontozoo.com for more.

ROMkids FAMILY DAY LONG WEEKEND Features hands-on crafts and activities for the whole family. This year's theme is Mesozoic Monsters. Runs Feb. 13-15, from 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. For more, visit rom.on.ca, call 416-586-8000 or email info@rom.on.ca.

FAMILY DAY WEEKEND AT THE ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE Watch as some of Canada's top jump-rope teams demonstrate their champion skills and techniques, or try one of two Olympic sport experiences. Also features a magic show with "The Great Baldini", and much more. Feb. 13-15, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 416-696-1000 for more.

COOK AND PLAY Bake cookies in the historic kitchen, and make wool dolls and other crafts at Campbell House Museum, 160 Queen St. W. $10 for families (4 individuals, max. 2 adults) or $3 per child, $6 per adult. From 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Feb. 15. Go to campbellhousemuseum.ca or call 416-597-0227 for more.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Half-price at the CN Tower
In honour of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games, CN Tower is offering two tickets for $20.10 from Feb. 12-15. Tickets include admission and entrance to the Look Out and Glass Floor levels. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Beach offers local escape

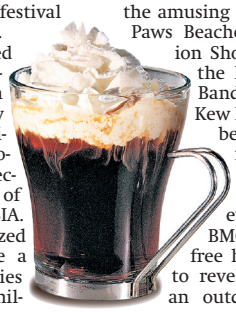
KEITH CARMAN
for Metro Toronto

Finding a way to enjoy Family Day isn't incredibly difficult. Still, when noses start turning up at couch surfing, bank-breaking tourist traps or aimless meandering around malls, options tend to wane.

While it seems odd to say in mid-February, think of heading to the Beach.

The Beach BIA Family Day festival is quickly becoming one of Toronto's favourite February holiday hotspots, thanks to a vast array of both outdoor and indoor events, nearby shops, eateries and entertainment for everyone.

Currently entering its third year, the festival takes place from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Kew Gardens (2075 Queen St., east of Woodbine Avenue) on Feb. 15, overflowing to embrace the entire Beach community. As an added bonus, all festival events are free.



"We jumped on the opportunity as soon as the holiday became official," says Deborah Etsten, executive director of the Beach BIA. "We recognized that there are a lot of families with young children in the Beach, and this would give them something to do close to home."

Despite its local focus, the event embraces Hogtown's entirety. This year's newest additions include animals brought in from the Bowmanville Zoo and the amusing Fashion Faux Paws Beaches Dog Fashion Show (1 p.m. in the Kew Gardens Bandshell). The Kew Rink will also be open for free skating from noon-4 p.m., with event sponsor BMO offering free hot chocolate to revellers. Games, an outdoor DJ and the Where's Buddy Scavenger Hunt open to all children round out the external attractions.

Those needing something a bit warmer are invited to visit the variety of indoor events held at the Waverley Baptist Church (129 Waverley Rd.) and Beach United Church (2 Bellefair Ave.), which bookend Kew Gardens.

Waverley hosts arts and crafts activities, face painting and Rona's Little Helpers woodworking, while Beach United will have two entertainment stages featuring Juno Award nominee Mary Lambert, The Grilled Cheese Band, Dean The Reptile Guy, Tricky Ricky The Magician, and more. Vendors will also offer their own entertainment via bands and/or author readings while satiating the pangs of hunger that naturally kick in after so much fresh air and excitement with various specials.

The Kew Rink will be open on Feb. 15 for free skating.

For more information, visit BeachBIA.com. Travellers' caveat: Street parking is available but limited. Visitors are encouraged to take public transit, taking the 501 Queen Streetcar Eastbound, exiting at Lee Avenue.

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B.C. reduces capital allowance for NWCC

British Columbia-based Northwest Community College's annual capital allowance will be reduced by 74 per cent, according to a community update from college president Stephanie Forsyth. As well, B.C.'s College of New Caledonia will see its annual capital allowance reduced next year, resulting in more than $1 million in cuts. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Workology

TVO Best Lecturers revealed

TVO announced yesterday the 10 finalists in this year's Big Ideas Best Lecturer Competition. Queen's, University of Toronto, and York have two contenders each, and Laurentian at Georgian College, Ryerson, UOIT, and uOttawa are each represented by one professor. Starting March 6, viewers across Ontario can watch the finalists deliver their lectures. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

Bringing Compliments food to grocery getters

Working the Wok

For the month of February, Metro's Workology section will be focusing on some delicious food-related careers. Check back every Wednesday for a new feature.

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

Lining the halls of grocery stores across Canada is tasty work, says Sobeys' John Hale.

John Hale has eaten his way to the top of the food chain, parlaying his sensitive palate into a job perfecting the Sobeys store-brand Compliments.

"I'm a sensitive guy," the stocky 40-something Yorkshire, England, man says to laughs from a colleague who describes him as "looking like a football hooligan."

Hale's tongue was poached from the U.K. supermarket chain Tesco in 2007 when he brought his 25 years of experience to Canada to take up a post as director of product appraisal and product development for Sobeys.

His job is to taste-train members of the public so that they can help Sobeys craft a range of delicious dishes. A team of 100 panelists are drawn from the general public and it's Hale's job to teach their tongues how to taste over a six-week course.

"When you start off with a customer, they always say, 'It's nice, it's tasty, it's lovely.' That's not really what I'm after — I'm after what's in that product," he explains.

He's not a chef and has never worked as one — he studied chemistry, not culinary — but his exceptional chops have made him a sought-after foodie.

He tends to arrive at work by 7 a.m. and works until 7 p.m., Monday to Friday. "A lot of that's my choice, because I'm dedicated to what I do," he says. "There's a lot pride here — pride in getting really good products out on the shelves."

Most of his day is spent eating food. Teams of 12 panelists work on a product, with six products sampled in a three-hour session. "We made sure that our products were good enough for our customers and if they weren't, we put them back in product development," he says. "To be honest with you, I don't think I've ever packed a lunch."

While most people think taste comes from the mouth, Hale says in fact the nose knows: 85 per cent of "taste" comes through smell.

Job hazards are hot and spicy foods, which can damage your taste buds, and the constant risk of overeating.

For Hale, his job is a dream come true. "I wouldn't swap working with food for anything," he says. And to unwind after work, he turns to his favourite pastime: Cooking.

France is the global hot spot for training people in his job, along with Leeds and Reading universities in the U.K.. In Canada, he cites George Brown College in Ontario.

For more of the Working the Wok exclusive series check Workology every Wednesday or stop by: metronews.ca/work

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Oft-asked workplace questions answered

WorkplaceLaw

Daniel Lublin

Metronews.ca/workplacelaw

Criticism is a must in the world we live. This is as true at work as it is in life, except that in workplace law there is always an exception. Here is a sampling of some of the questions readers of this column frequently ask and the answers I often provide.

Performance appraisals

When assessing merit, your appraisals matter. When assessing severance, they are generally irrelevant. This is because poor performance is rarely cause for dismissal. Similarly, there is no such concept as "near cause," which means there should be no correlation between your level of performance and the quantum of severance you will ultimately receive. Therefore, if you are fired and it relates to performance, you should receive the same severance as if it did not.

Letters of reference

Employees often think they are entitled to a reference. They are mistaken. There is no right to a letter of reference, no matter how long or meritorious your service.

Restrictive covenants

Despite agreeing to non-compete agreements, very few employees are later held to them, no matter how appropriately the clause was drafted. Non-solicitation clauses, however, are a different story. Courts have consistently upheld agreements not to solicit former clients or employees after departure, despite how important you may or may not have been.

Employment contracts

If there is a written contract, it has to meet a number of tests. The employee must, at least, be given the opportunity to negotiate or those terms that are punitive may not be enforced later on. This rule also applies during the course of employment, except that something of greater value must also be offered, such as a raise or a promotion. Otherwise, the courts have reasoned, an employer could unilaterally impose new terms, and an employee would be left without the leverage to negotiate or refuse.

Resignations:

If you resign with advance notice and your employer asks you to immediately leave, are you entitled to pay for the remaining period of notice? Unless there is a contract that says otherwise, generally you are.

Independent contractor agreements

It usually will not matter that workers have signed agreements confirming they are independent from their employers. When this characterization is challenged, sometimes many years later, courts are apt to find these workers were truly employees. No surprise there.

Many times the contract represented little else than a "label." What matters is how the parties actually behaved.

Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer with Whitten & Lublin LLP. Reach him at dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com.

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CBC PHOTO

Frank Janicek gets some hard advice from the Dragons about his board game, Take Me To The Cleaners, on tonight's episode of Dragon's Den. It airs at 8 p.m. on CBC.

When it comes to advice, it's always your decision

Dragons' Den

Dianne Buckner

metronews.ca/dragonsden

Have you ever asked for advice about your career? And did you take that advice?

I'm a big believer in consulting experienced, knowledgeable people before making any big moves in your workplace. It's good to get a variety of perspectives, and possibly more information, before taking a significant step.

Tonight on Dragons' Den, one of the Canadian entrepreneurs pitching for investment won't listen to Kevin's advice about how to proceed with his product.

"Why aren't you listening to me?" Kevin demands. "What's the matter with you?"

Whether or not this entrepreneur should listen to Kevin could be debated. Certainly all of the Dragons have been incredibly successful in business, so any bits of wisdom they share should be considered. But at the end of the day, everyone does have to make their own decision, since we're the ones who will bear the consequences.

A good friend of mind once acted on some bad advice. He'd been having difficulty in his workplace — the boss was having an affair with a member of the team and that person seemed to be getting the best assignments. My friend consulted another colleague, who worked in a different department. "Go to your boss's supervisor," he was told. "This is a bad situation, and someone higher up has to intervene."

But what my friend didn't consider was that the person giving him advice was as new to the company as he was. Neither realized that the badly-behaved boss had worked for the company a long time, and was able to command a higher level of loyalty than he was as a junior employee. Shortly after making his report to the top executive, my friend was told his contract would not be renewed.

Maybe his boss got a stern lecture about the affair; maybe not. The point is, my friend was ill-advised, and ended up being out of a job.

It's important that if you do want some guidance, you speak to people who you respect. And even then, you have to feel comfortable with the action they recommend. Again, it's YOU that will have to deal with the outcome, good or bad.

I think we should also be careful about giving advice. It's easy to shoot from the hip about what a person should do in any given situation, but if you're not truly confident about your recommendation, don't give it.

Watch tonight, and see if you think Kevin's advice was good or bad!

Dianne Buckner hosts Dragons' Den and is also a weekend anchor on the CBC News Network. Dragons' Den airs tonight at 8 p.m. on CBC.

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Ontario receives support for some skills training programs from the Government of Canada

uSask breaks ground for new student residence

Monday marked the start of construction of the University of Saskatchewan's new student residence, a project in which the province has invested $15 million. The $35.9-million residence will accommodate 400 students. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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A Valentine's song especially for you

Valentine's Day

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

Earning a living as a full-time musician can be a tough gig, so it's no wonder Halifax singer Ryan MacGrath can be yours for a song — literally. MacGrath auctioned off the composition of an original love song for Valentine's Day.

Bidding was fierce at Ryanmacgrath.com and even after the winner was announced, a second would-be Romeo hired MacGrath to write him a birthday gift. MacGrath will now write a song based on the winner's own love story and create an original painting for the CD case.

He said the idea came when he had some down time before his full-length debut album Cooper Hatch Paris drops in May.

"I like the challenge. I like the notion of going outside of myself and ultimately having to write something more universal," he explained. "When I'm writing my own songs, it tends to be very personal. Something like this, it gets me out of my own head and my own fear and forces me to think in a broader way."

He's done commissioned songs in the past and is he's eager to do more. He can be hired via his website.

SCOTT BLACKBURN PHOTO

Musician Ryan MacGrath auctioned off a song for one lucky couple this Valentine's Day.

"I love the idea of having the audience contribute to the music they will ultimately listen to," he said.

The song was bought for a mere $200 by Halifax businessman Michael Christie. He met with MacGrath early this month to give him the raw materials to turn into tune by Valentine's Day. Christie had seen MacGrath perform before and loved his Rufus Wainwright-esque songs.

MacGrath will write about Christie's romance with Nicholas, his husband of three years. Their first Valentine's Day eight years ago set the bar low, with Nicholas offering Michael a hotdog-shaped card.

"It was the tackiest Valentine's card you could possibly find. It looked like something Homer Simpson would buy," Michael Christie said. "Maybe this year we'll be inspired to at least listen to the song and have a nice glass of wine."

Always the businessman, Christie hopes it'll accrue in value. "Maybe one day when he's successful, I'll have a very early song that was commissioned just for me," he said. If not, it'll surely appreciate in sentimental value. Christie imagines coming across the CD 40 years from now. "After we figure out how to play it, we'll be like, 'Hey, it's that song!'"

> **"When I'm writing my own songs, it tends to be very personal. (Writing for others) gets me out of my own head and ... forces me to think in a broader way."**
> Ryan MacGrath

Ryan MacGrath plays C'est What tonight.

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Toronto high-school student teams are going to the Toronto auto show to test their mechanical aptitude. The students will be vying for a chance to represent the Toronto Automobile Dealers Association (TADA) at the National Automotive Technology Competition at the New York International Auto Show in March. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

The 2011 Buick Regal, left, and the new BMW Z4 will make their Canadian debuts at the 2010 Canadian International Auto in Toronto. For more debuts, turn to pg. 26.

The Vision on wheels

Toronto auto show reflects optimism about future

MARK ATKINSON
for Metro Canada

Fuelled by bankruptcies, massive recalls, and drastically lowered sales numbers, the last year has been an interesting time in the auto industry.

All signs in 2009 pointed toward turmoil, both in North America and the rest of the world. However, now that we're firmly into 2010, things have stabilized somewhat, and in most cases, automakers are pushing forward with new products and renewed vigour.

It's fitting then that the theme for the 2010 Canadian International Auto Show (CIAS), which kicks off this Friday in Toronto, is Vision. Whether that references the ability to predict the turmoil of the last year and ride it out successfully, or describes a grand plan to the Promised Land depends on which man-ufacturer you're discussing.

David McClean, CIAS director of marketing services, believes the upcoming show is well positioned to reflect current trends.

"In developing the program for this year, we wanted to reflect the industry's thinking. There is now a much more serious commitment to alternative fuels and about good design. The whole industry now has a feeling of cautious optimism."

"There continues to be growing customer confidence and excitement for our newest vehicles from our four core brands: Chevrolet, Buick, GMC and Cadillac," says Marc Comeau, GM of Canada's vice-president of sales, service and marketing.

One of the only manufacturers to buck the general downward trend in 2009 — Hyundai Canada — is also upbeat about the possibilities for this year.

"We have a lot to be proud of at Hyundai right now," said Steve Kelleher, president and CEO, Hyundai Auto Canada Corp.

"We've just come off our best year ever, and things look very promising for 2010 as well."

This year's show is positioning itself as a total automotive experience. Beyond the glut of new vehicles, there is the classic car display, a tribute to the legendary Carroll Shelby and a whole host of other family friendly events.

New for this year is Test Drive 2010 where members of the public can drive various GM, Subaru and Mercedes-Benz models on a surface street route.

For more information, visit autoshow.ca.

The Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG, with its trademark gullwings, will grace the Toronto auto show.

2010 AutoShow

- **What:** 2010 Canadian International Auto Show
- **When:** Friday to Sunday, Feb. 21
- **Where:** Metro Toronto Convention Centre
- **Hours:** Daily from 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Final day from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- **Tickets:** $20 for adults, $7 for children aged 7-12, children 6 and under free. Multi-day pass $30. Family Pass $40 (2 adults, 2 children 12 and under).
- **Closest subway:** Union Station, then Skywalk west toward Rogers Centre
- **Parking:** Free Parking at Harbourfront Centre on Queen's Quay and Lower Simcoe. Shuttle bus service runs entire length of show.

On the web

- Metro writers Jil McIntosh and Michael Goetz give you the lowdown on the Toronto auto show. Visit metronews.ca/blogs to read their rants and raves.

Technical wonders under the hood

JIL MCINTOSH
for Metro Canada

The 2010 Canadian International Auto Show is more than just new car models: Many automakers are also using the cars on display to show off the latest in technology advancements.

Music is the main feature behind the **2011 Lincoln MKX's** new MyLincoln Touch. It's a system of re-designed display screens, controls and voice commands, but especially interesting is iTunes Tagging. If you like a song that's playing on the radio, hit a button to tag it. Dock your iPod and it downloads the information.

Mitsubishi's PX-MiEV can be used as a generator to power household appliances.

On the vehicle technology side is Mitsubishi's Concept **PX-MiEV**. It contains a gasoline engine, electric motor and battery pack like a hybrid, but it's capable of three propulsion methods. The PX-MiEV can be programmed to recharge itself during cheaper off-peak hours, and if the power goes out, the vehicle can even be used as a stationary generator to power household appliances.

For another look at the future, Mazda is showing its **RX-8 Hydrogen RE**. The regular RX-8 is the only car you can buy in Canada today with a rotary engine, a design that dates back to the 1950s. While all other internal combustion engines contain pistons that move up and down to produce power, the RX-8 uses spinning rotors. The Hydrogen RE goes one step further with a dual-fuel system that can burn either hydrogen, which results in a tailpipe emission of only water vapour, or gasoline, which is much easier to find at a station. The Hydrogen RE is currently being tested on public roads in Norway and Japan.

The Mazda RX-8 Hydrogen RE

Debuts to dazzle

The 2011 Infiniti M

MARK ATKINSON
for Metro Canada

Whether it's a hot hatch or a sporty coupe, car debuts are probably the biggest attractions at a motor show. Here are some of the new models that are set to wow the crowd at 2010 Canadian International Auto Show in Toronto

BMW ACTIVEHYBRID7

BMW creates a "greener" limousine that still performs brilliantly with the new ActiveHybrid7. With 455-hp and more than 500 lb-ft of torque, this monster still delivers the athleticism the company's customers demand.

BMW Z4 SDRIVE35IS

While the sDrive35is is not a replacement for the much-loved Z4 M Roadster, it's close enough. Power is up by 30 hp and comes exclusively with the seven-speed dual-clutch gearbox.

2011 FORD FOCUS

The next-generation Focus finally gives North Americans the same vehicle as the rest of the world. The The new Focus will also be the basis for Ford's first Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) partnership with Magna International later in 2011.

The 2011 Ford Focus.

2011 LINCOLN MKX

The Oakville built MKX receives a mid-cycle facelift to better reflect Lincoln's more dramatic design, along with a third-generation version of Ford's SYNC system called MyLincoln Touch. The 3.7-litre V6 now produces more than 300 hp, which is a significant upgrade over the 2010 version.

2011 BUICK REGAL

This is not your Grandfather's Buick: The 2011 Regal will take the fight straight to the Acura TSX in terms of power, athletic ability and luxury with a pair of new four-cylinder engines. Based heavily on popular European Opel models, the stylish Regal will be assembled in Oshawa, Ont., starting in 2012.

2011 HONDA CR-Z

Using bits from the current Fit subcompact and Insight hybrid, the Honda CR-Z mates an attractive coupe body onto the "green" hybrid drivetrain. Honda is trying hard to renew the love of the old '80s CRX.

2011 HYUNDAI SONATA

This is the car Toyota is worried about. While the current Sonata affirmed Hyundai's abilities in creating a spacious, reliable and frugal mid-sized sedan, the new 2011 version adds style and substance to the mix. Very bravely, Hyundai is abandoning V6 engines for the Sonata, predicting that their own smaller direct-injection four-cylinder engines will fill that gap for most consumers.

The 2011 Hyundai Sonata

2011 INFINITI M

The latest version of Infiniti's 5-Series fighter is gorgeous, powerful and poised to steal plenty of sales. Expect both V6-powered M37 and V8-powered M56 models to be on hand.

2011 MERCEDES-BENZ SLS AMG

The SLS AMG is a deliberate throwback to the old Mercedes-Benz "Gullwing" SL coupes from the '50s. Has to be seen in the metal to be appreciated.

2010 TOYOTA PRIUS PLUG-IN

Toyota quietly rolled the plug-in version of its Prius out during the 2009 Los Angeles Auto Show, and it makes its Canadian debut with a little more fanfare. Adding lithium-ion batteries allows it to travel nearly 20 km on electricity alone. The gauntlet is thrown towards the upcoming Chevrolet Volt.

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PER MONTH FOR 48 MONTHS WITH $3,726 DOWN
ON APPROVED CREDIT
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Accord LX Sedan
model CP2E3AE

2010 ACCORD

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TURN-KEY PRICE $26,475 For Accord LX Sedan
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ON APPROVED CREDIT
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CR-V LX 2WD
model RE3H3AEY

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TURN-KEY PRICE $28,015 For CR-V LX 2WD
Includes Freight & Fees

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#Limited time lease offers based on new 2010 Honda models. Lease examples based on new 2010 Civic DX Sedan, model FA1E2AEX / 2010 Accord LX Sedan, model CP2E3AE / 2010 CR-V LX 2WD, model RE3H3AEY available through Honda Financial Services on approved credit. £2.9% / 2.9% / 2.9% lease APR for 48 / 48 / 48 months. Monthly payment is $148 / $248 / $268. Down payment or equivalent trade of $3,726 / $5,286 / $5,083 (includes freight and PDI, A/C tax where applicable, and environmental and OMVIC fees), first monthly payment and $0/$0/$0 security deposit due at lease inception. Total lease obligation is $12,237.90 / $19,559.70 / $20,415.11. Taxes, license, insurance and lien registration (if applicable) are extra. 96,000 kilometre allowance; charge of $0.12/km for excess Kilometres. Retailer may lease for less. Retailer order / trade may be necessary. ‡Limited time financing offers based on new 2010 Honda models. Finance example based on new 2010 Civic DX Sedan, model FA1E2AEX available through Honda Financial Services on approved credit. ‡MSRP is $17,420 (TURN-KEY PRICE includes $1,430 freight and PDI, and environmental and OMVIC fees) financed at 0.9% APR equals $297.02 per month for 60 months. Cost of borrowing is $401.43 for a total obligation of $17,821.43. Taxes, license, insurance and registration are extra. Retailer order / trade may be necessary, ¥Prices lowered by $500 on all new 2010 Accord 4-cylinder models; by $1,000 on all new 2010 Accord V6 models; by $1,000 on all new 2010 Civic models except Hybrid; by $1,500 on all new 2010 CR-V models. #/£/†Offers valid from January 27th, 2010 through March 1st, 2010 at participating Honda retailers. Offers valid only for Ontario residents at Ontario Honda Dealers. Offers subject to change or cancellation without notice. See your Honda retailer for full details. *As reported by Canadian manufacturers for calendar year 2009.

Dream machines

MARK ATKINSON
for Metro Canada

Concept cars allow automakers to float design trial balloons to the general public without seriously committing to the vehicle in question.

However, increasingly, the label "concept' is being attached to lightly disguised production models that are green lighted for rollout later in the year.

The mix on display at the 2010 Canadian International Auto Show combines the dream machines with the fairly certain. Here's a look at some of concepts to watch out for at this year's show:

INFINITI ESSENCE

This vision of Infiniti's future design language debuted in 2009 just before the Los Angeles Auto Show, and popped up earlier this year in Montreal before arriving at the CIAS this February. Based loosely on the mechanicals of parent company Nissan's world-beating GT-R, the Essence also uses a slim electric motor to deliver more power and efficiency.

MAZDA2

Mazda is showing two versions of its upcoming European-based 2 subcompact car. Called the 2Evil Special and the Active2 Surf Special, they essentially show how a potential owner might modify their ride. The 2Evil mixes flat grey paint and lime-green touches to show off Mazda's sporting credentials, while the Active 2 Surf is a modern-day surf wagon, complete with roof rack, colour-matched surfboard and bigger wheels.

The Mini Beachcomber

The 2Evil Special from Mazda

MINI BEACHCOMBER

Making its Canadian debut, the MINI Beachcomber mixes the old Moke's exposed-to-the-elements design with the modern MINI's technology. It previews the company's upcoming small crossover and features all-wheel drive, four seats and no roof. As with another recent MINI concept, this one is decidedly over the top.

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2010 MAZDA3 SPORT GX
Auto trn, aircon, power locks, windows, mirrors,ABS with EBFD, 6 air bags, AM/FM Radio with CD player.
$18,295

2010 MAZDA 3 GS
Auto, aircon, power locks, windows, Heated side mirrors, Keyless entry, ABS with EBFD, 6 airbags, AM/FM Radio with CD player, Alloy wheels, Bluetooth, rain sensing wipers
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2010 MAZDA 6 GT V6
WITH NAVIGATION
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2010 MAZDA 5 GS
auto, aircon, power locks, windows, mirrors, Keyless entry ABS with EBFD, 6 airbags, AM/FM Radio with CD player, 6 seater.
$21,495

2010 MAZDA 6 GT I4
Auto, aircon, Leather heated seats, Moonroof, power locks, windows, Heated side mirrors, Keyless entry, ABS with EBFD, 6 airbags, AM/FM Radio with 6 CD indash, Traction control, DSC, 18 Alloy wheels, Bluetooth, rain sensing wipers
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‡Limited time lease offers based on new 2010 Honda models. Lease example based on new 2010 CR-V LX 2WD, model RE3H3AEY available through Honda Financial Services on approved credit. 0.9% lease APR for 48 months. Monthly payment (TURN-KEY PRICE includes $1,725 freight and PDI, environmental fees and OMVIC fee) is $268. Down payment or equivalent trade of $5,083, first monthly payment and $0 security deposit due at lease inception. Total lease obligation is $20,415.11. Taxes, license, insurance (lien registration when applicable) are extra. 96,000 Kilometre allowance; charge of $0.12/km for excess kilometres. Retailer order /trade may be necessary. ‡Limited time financing offers based on new 2010 Honda models. Finance example based on a new 2010 Civic DX Sedan, model FA1E2AEX available through Honda Financial Services on approved credit. ‡MSRP is $17,420 (TURN-KEY PRICE includes $1,450 freight and PDI, environmental fees and OMVIC fee). Interest at 0.9% APR equals $238.72 per month for 60 months. Cost of borrowing is $1,407.43 for a total obligation of $17,827.43. Taxes, license, insurance (lien registration when applicable) are extra. Retailer order /trade may be necessary. ¥Limited time offers based on new 2010 Accord LX Sedan, model CP2E3AE and new 2010 Civic DX Sedan, model FA1E2AEX available through Honda Financial Services on approved credit. Offers valid from January 27th, 2010 through March 1st, 2010 at participating Honda retailers. Offers valid only for Ontario residents at Centre Honda. Offers subject to change or cancellation without notice. See Centre Honda retailer for full details. †As reported by Canadian manufacturers for calendar year 2009.

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Show trendsetters come in pairs

AutoPilot

Michael Goetz
metronews.ca/autopilot

On some levels, the Toronto auto show, which gets underway this Friday, is a bit like Noah's ArK.

The show is drier of course, and equipped with better washroom facilities.

But like that mythical ship, the auto show contains a somewhat complete collection of current species.

I don't think many went onto the show floor "two-by-two" — but some of them could have — and we'll look at three such pairings today.

If there is just one of something, it could be an aberration or something wacky, but when there is already two of something, well, that means the form is already making some headway…

The Chevrolet Volt and the Toyota Prius Plug-In concept can be charged on household current AND you can put gasoline into their tanks. They straddle the line between the "regular" hybrid and full-on electric vehicle.

Right now they are "rock stars" when it comes to mpg or kilometres per litre. If you're diligent on your charging duties, these vehicles could theatrically get more than 1,000 mpg.

The jury will be out for a while, on whether these make long-term sense, because they appear to be so focused on addressing the current absence of "plug-in everywhere" infrastructure, and our current insecurity about full electric vehicles.

The Chevy Volt, along with the Toyota Prius Plug-in, herald a new trend in green vehicles. Both can be seen at this year's auto show.

Ford Focus and Buick Regal are a new breed of domestic nameplate — completely sophisticated and citizens of the world.

The 2011 Ford Focus is essentially the same car Ford will sell in 122 different world markets. Initial production is set for Germany and Michigan. The new Regal is closely based on the Opel Insignia, named 2009 European Car of the Year.

When GM received restructuring money from Canada last year, it promised to build three future models here — the Regal is one of those models.

Will we see more such globally produced and engineered products? Is Lady Gaga a snappy dresser?

The all-new 2011 Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG and the vintage Shelby Cobra "Daytona Coupe" sports racer is another interesting auto show pairing. The former replaces SLR as the flagship sports car from Mercedes-Benz. The latter is part of the show's fantastic Carroll Shelby Exhibit, featuring six of the world-famous racers that Shelby created at his iconic race shop.

Shelby only made six Daytona Coupes. Last year one sold for $7.5 million US. The SLS AMG is a relative bargain, at $198,000. Both have huge engines, long hoods, two seats, and purposeful yet beautiful styling — attributes that virtually all sports cars have had for about 100 years or so. I predict that this type of automotive expression just might be a keeper.

Michael Goetz has been writing about cars and editing automotive publications for over 20 years. He lives in Toronto with his family and a neglected 1967 Jaguar E-type.

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Cruise Nationals bring vintage gold

JIL MCINTOSH
for Metro Canada

A 1955 Oldsmobile 98. left, and a 1958 Corvette will be part of the Cruise Nationals exhibit.

While the Canadian International Auto Show in Toronto is primarily a showcase for new cars, there's still a rich sense of history. Peek into the Metro Convention Centre's 800 Level and you'll see examples of "vintage tin": the 10 cars and trucks in the Cruise Nationals.

More than just a display, the cars are also in competition for three top prizes. They'll be selected by a combination of online public ballots and a panel of celebrity judges.

The vehicles competing include a 1949 Ford F-47 pickup truck, 1932 Ford coupe, 1971 Chevrolet Nova SS, 1968 Camaro Z28, 1947 Cadillac convertible, 1965 Pontiac GTO convertible, 1958 and 1963 Chevrolet Corvettes, 1955 Oldsmobile 98, and 1951 Mercury Monarch.

In addition to celebrating the golden age of motoring, the show also honours the "cruise night." Believed to have originated in Cambridge, Ont., in the 1980s and now popular across the continent, cruise nights are informal old-car get-togethers, where owners drive in with their vehicles to show them to friends.

At a season-end show at the CNE, Cruise Nationals event supervisor Jon Rosenthall selected the ten cars for the show.

"To the best of my knowledge, this is unique among auto shows," he says. "We started doing this in 2004."

The gold, silver and bronze winners will be announced tomorrow. All 10 cars will be on display throughout the auto show.

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And now for some good news.

We don't mean to boast, but last year 59 auto journalists from 25 countries declared the new Golf the 2009 World Car of the Year. In their words, the new Golf "feels more expensive than other family hatches, thanks to its solid build and high quality cabin." They also said, "sitting on an outstanding chassis, the VW is more refined than its rivals." We're flattered. And also a bit surprised that so many people from so many countries could reach an agreement on anything.

Then the Automobile Journalists Association of Canada gave three of our vehicles AJAC awards. The 2010 Touareg TDI Clean Diesel won for Best New SUV/CUV $35,000 – $60,000. The 2010 Golf Wagon TDI Clean Diesel won for Best New Family Car under $30,000. And the 2010 Golf GTI won for Best New Sports/Performance Car under $50,000. Not bad considering only 12 awards were handed out, not that we're counting.

And it isn't just the press that's taking notice either. Volkswagen recently became the third-largest automaker in the world. Which means that a lot of people gave us something far more important than any award: a space in their driveway. And to us, that's the best news of all.

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World Car Awards
2009 World Car of the Year
2010 Golf

AJAC
Best New SUV / CUV
2010 Touareg TDI Clean Diesel
$35,000 – $60,000

AJAC
Best New Family Car
2010 Golf Wagon TDI Clean Diesel
Under $30,000

AJAC
Best New Sports/
Performance Car
2010 Golf GTI
Under $50,000

Das Auto.

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Cheap flights coming to Alaska?

Travel industry officials say more airline flights to Alaska this summer may boost competition and result in lower fares to some Lower 48 cities. Daily nonstop service to Anchorage flights have increased by 50 per cent. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Travel

Aspen adopting tourists

Find this ritzy ski resort a little snobby? Aspenites are working on it. A city tourism initiative announced this week seeks to shake off Aspen's unfriendly reputation, according to the Aspen Daily News. The Adopt a Tourist promotion has city officials asking residents to volunteer to play host for visiting tourists.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: BEN.RYCROFT@METRONEWS.CA

Part of the large botanical garden at Excellence Punta Cana.

Delivering Excellence

Forget the flowers, head south for your Valentine's Day

JOHN AND SANDRA NOWLAN
For Metro Canada

Flowers and chocolates may be ideal gifts for Valentine's Day but many couples are opting for a more exotic treat in a tropical, luxury setting.

All-inclusive Caribbean resorts that cater only to adults are becoming more popular with Canadians. Few do it better than Excellence Punta Cana at the far eastern end of the Dominican Republic.

The 450 room Excellence Punta Cana is about an hours drive from the modern, efficient thatched-roof airport, positioned in a series of low rise buildings along a half kilometre stretch of soft, golden sand.

JOHN NOWLAN/METRO CANADA

Horseback rides come complimentary at Excellence.

The Dominican coast line is some of the best in the world.

Our late evening arrival didn't prevent a warm Dominican welcome with chilled glasses of sparkling wine in the lobby, a seamless check-in and, in our large suite (four-poster, king-size beds and marble floors are standard), a bubble bath in our double Jacuzzi with rose petals, candles and incense — a great romantic start to a week's vacation.

Couples only resort

In the morning we awoke gentle sea breezes blowing through scores of dancing palm trees and a perfect 25 degree temperature. The breakfast buffet convinced us that this resort was special. In addition to the usual goodies (including excellent waffles, fresh-baked bagels and outstanding coffee) two types of caviar were offered as well as mimosa and Bloody Mary stations.

Fine cuisine is beginning to set the Dominican Republic apart from other all-inclusive resort areas of the Caribbean.

One of the reasons Excellence seems to excel (while attracting guests from honeymooners to seniors) is its policy of a la carte dining every evening in its eight theme restaurants. There's also an emphasis on fresh, local produce. Choices include Chez Isabelle (French), Agave (Mexican), Barcelona (Mediterranean, including excellent tapas), Toscana (Italian), Spice (Pan-Asian), Oregana (informal pizza and pasta), The Lobster House (sadly, only Caribbean lobster) and The Grill steakhouse (the favourite of the meat-loving Greens from Edmonton).

Once a week there's also a Dominican night, usually on the beach, where chefs prepare local specialties including roast suckling pig, fish in coconut sauce, stewed goat with rum and oregano, yucca with garlic and onions, plantain pie and Dominican sausage.

Any couple wanting a special, romantic dinner by the sea can choose (at extra cost) a private, candlelit meal directly on the beach with a special menu, unobtrusive service, fine wines and an unbeatable ambience. Honeymooners (wedding packages are a specialty here) often choose this candlelight and moonlight option.

In the Caribbean, the sun is the same wherever you go.

The water is virtually the same. It's how you're treated that makes the difference.

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Venice getting ready to party
Masked merrymakers are cavorting in Venice to mark the start of Carnival. The canal-laced city's pre-Lenten festivities are Italy's most popular. Venetian souvenir shops are crammed year-round with colourful, delicate masks, but Carnevale is the time to put them on. METRO NEWS SERVICES

METRO WORLD NEWS

Fans of Olympic bobsledding will want to try out this course in the Alps themselves.

Get in the driver's seat

Alps resort offering bobsled rides to tourists

RICHARD MORIARTY
For Metro World

The advertisement persuading skiers enjoying the Alps to clamber into a bobsled and careen down a track at more than 120kph shows two smiling girls without a care in the world.

Like most marketing ploys it's not exactly a true reflection of how you feel as you hurtle into terrifying bends a couple of inches above the floor in something similar to a metal coffin. Smiling comes a poor second to hanging on for dear life

But having taken on the 1.5km course in Paradiski in the French Alps in one minute 10 seconds, I can assure wannabe daredevils that it is great fun — but it's difficult to smile when G-forces are trying to force your face through the back of your helmet.

Most people will see some bobsled events at this year's Olympics but the only way to find out just how scary the sport is to do it yourself.

That's how I found myself strapped in a Mono Bob (cost $103) on an ice-covered track which was used in the 1992 Albertville Olympics during a long weekend skiing.

When I got to the bottom and completed the most terrifying event in my life, I decided if given the chance again I'd take it. But next time I might opt to be taken down the hill with a professional driver.

METRO WORLD NEWS

The Mono Bob ride costs $103.

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- Les Chalets Edelweiss sits at the bottom of the slopes in La Plagne 1800 and an apartment for 4 people starts at $1,076 per week.
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4 top choco-locations

Metro compiles a list of spots to take your sweet tooth

If you're dating a chocolate lover, you may want to consider travelling to one of Canada's choco-locations this Valentine's Day.

Metro has compiled the top four chocolate destinations for your eating pleasure.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Sutton Place in Vancouver tops our list.

4 Calgary, Alberta

The Rimrock at The Fairmont Palliser in Calgary features special Monday nights which end in Death by Chocolate — the cake, that is.

3 St. Stephen, New Brunswick

The town registered itself as "Canada's chocolate town" in 2000, has a chocolate museum and has been the home of Ganong Chocolates since 1873.

2 Gatineau, Quebec

Miss Chocolat has been making fine chocolates since 1989. Passion and creativity are the extra ingredients in her mouth-watering truffles, candied chocolates and glistening, dark, heart-shaped chocolate boxes. And you can learn how it's done with her interactive workshops for adults and kids ages five and up.

1 Vancouver, British Columbia

The Sutton Place Hotel boasts Vancouver's only all-you-can-eat chocolate buffet. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Vacations

New Orleans Air + 3 Nights $559
Chateau Le Moyne + taxes & fees $129
INCLUDES accom in the French Quarter.
Departs Mar 1/ggv/aa.

Orlando Family Special
Air + 5 Nights $139◊
Champions World Resort + taxes & fees $231
Departs Mar 28/ggv/ts.

Atlantic City March Break
Air + 3 Nights 4-Star $149
Ballys Atlantic City + taxes & fees $109
Departs Mar 15/wsv/ws.

Mont Tremblant March Break
Air + 3 Nights + 2-Day Ski Pass $574
Les Tremblant Suites + taxes & fees $100
Departs Mar 12/ggv/ws.

Quebec City & Hotel De Glace
Air + 3 Nights $629
Loews Le Concorde & Hotel De Glace + taxes & fees $102
INCLUDES 2 nights Quebec City accom & 1 night Ice Hotel accom. Travel Mar 1-9/ggv/ws.
ADD Quebec City sightseeing tour from $44.

Hawai'i Air + 7 Nights $849
Ohana Waikiki West + taxes & fees $152
INCLUDES Waikiki accom in Honolulu.
Departs Apr 20/ggv/dl.

International Vacations

London Air + First 2 Nights $339
Thistle Euston + taxes & fees $390
BONUS daily breakfast included.
Travel May 4 - 10/vat/ts.

Spain, Calella Air + 7 Nights $899
Apartamentos Neptuno + taxes & fees $295
INCLUDES airport transfers and apartment style accom with kitchenette located close to the beach and less than 1 hour drive from Barcelona.
Departs May 29/vat/ts.

Dubai Air + First 4 Nights + Activity $1199
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Sibide's mom singing in the subway
Although Gabourey Sidibe recently earned an Academy Award nomination for her performance in Precious, her mother — Alice Tan Ridley — is still singing in New York City subway stations to make money. "My name is not on Gabby's paycheck," Ridley told The NY Post. **POPEATER.COM**

Entertainment

TV Survivor
The host has spoken. Jeff Probst is staying on Survivor for its 21st and 22nd seasons.
PEOPLE.COM

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Big love a man's job

Valentine's Day – Which Gender Has More Stress?

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

Whether you're lucky at love or anxiously looking, the upcoming romantic comedy Valentine's Day aims to analyze the swelling stress that squires a full day of devotion.

No matter on what side of the equation you sit, one such issue that the star-studded affair explores —which gender encounters the most pressure on Valentine's Day — found many of the film's actors definitely in agreement recently in L.A.:

Valentine's Day opens Friday

Ashton Kutcher, from left, Jessica Alba, Topher Grace and Anne Hathaway star in the new movie Valentine's Day.

SHE SAID

Jennifer Garner: "Men — unless you're in Japan. We've learned that in Japan, women choose a guy to give a chocolate to (on Valentine's Day) so the guy's just waiting to get the chocolate ... but here it's definitely the men. The men have to make it happen."

Anne Hathaway: "I absolutely think it's women, of course! I have to side with my gender ... I just think it's so much pressure to find a red dress, to find a Valentine's Day-coloured dress. What if it's not in your color palate, what do you do?"

Jessica Alba: "It depends who you talk to. Generally, I think women get a little more excited about the idea of having a Valentine or a secret admirer or a boyfriend and guys — maybe not so much. But I know some guys who are totally into it and they're sad if they don't have a date on Valentine's Day."

HE SAID

George Lopez: "There's more pressure on men. That gear is stripped — the gear that tells us that 'hey, Valentine's Day is coming; you ought to get some cards a couple weeks in advance and properly sign them ... and not send a text.'"

Jamie Foxx: "Man, I just remember having those crushes (in school) and nothing like it going your way ... (one of my friends recently) bought (his Valentine) underwear. Not Victoria's Secret! Like drawers!"

Topher Grace: "I have been in the situation where you've been dating about two weeks; it hasn't even dawned on me that Valentine's Day is coming and this year I really should know but it kind of comes up on you and all of a sudden. It's this day about commitment and you have to make some kind of statement or non-statement — it's a lot of pressure for a guy."

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Offbeat films warm hearts

ADAM NAYMAN
for Metro Canada

Garry Marshall's Valentine's Day is merely the latest — and most explicitly titled — Hollywood rom-com with designs on blitzing the mid-February box office.

Its starry ensemble cast, which includes a pair of Taylors (Lautner and Swift) and two Jessicas (Alba and Biel), will probably entice plenty of couples to the multiplex, but our advice to cinema-loving lovebirds is to stay in, turn the lights down, and sample one of the more offbeat titles on the following list.

Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy return for the sequel Before Sunrise.

ADVENTURELAND

Greg Mottola's follow-up to Superbad was advertised as another crude crowd-pleaser, but it's a more delicate piece of work. There's a plausible slow-burn to the relationship between amusement park wage-slaves Jesse Eisenberg and Kristen Stewart, and the scene where they joy-ride bumper cars with a Cure song in the background should hit a bittersweet nerve with '80s babies.

BEFORE SUNSET

Celine (Julie Delpy) and Jesse (Ethan Hawke) go boating — and walking, driving and maybe to bed in Richard Linklater's sublime two-hander, a meditation on time and memory that might be the best brief encounter since Brief Encounter. It's also probably the best sequel ever made, narrowly edging out Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan.

FRIDAY NIGHT

Claire Denis is one of the cinema's great sensualists, and her 2002 film about a young woman's last night of single-hood — and the handsome man she meets in the midst of a Parisian traffic jam — fairly tingles with visual pleasure: Under her gaze, even the late-night clean-up at an empty café feels like an enchanted moment.

IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE

A Hong Kong apartment complex is transformed into a hothouse of repressed desire in Wong Kar Wai's achingly beautiful period piece. As neighbours staving off mutual attraction for the sake of their respective marriages, Tony Leung and Maggie Cheung embody longing like they hold the patent.

TWO LOVERS

A troubled loner (Joaquin Phoenix) sets his sights on a blonde goddess (Gwyneth Paltrow) while dismissing the affections of a family friend (Vinessa Shaw). James Gray's tortured love triangle resonates with empathy for all its characters, and articulates the dark side of infatuation with real eloquence.

Girls are more fun
Eric Dane and Rebecca Gayheart's first child is almost here, and Dane says he's thrilled at the prospect of being father to a little girl. "It just makes sense that I'm having a girl ... I don't know what it is, but I am excited it's a girl," he said. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Casa Loma and Dracula — made for each other

JOHN KEILLOR
for Metro Canada

The legend of Count Dracula hinges on love and death. In films, Max Shreck's bug-eyed demon from 1922's Noferatu barely resembles Gary Oldman's gothic metrosexual from 1992's Bram Stoker's Dracula.

However, both characters feed on humans and are obsessed with an innocent woman, making vampires innately romantic.

Toronto's gorgeously spooky Casa Loma is hosting Dracula — A love story, which features a castle tour and a live-acted vampire play for February. Bring a date and follow the action from room to room. Witness the latest incarnation of history's sexiest monster.

Dracula
- Opens tomorrow at Casa Loma. Buy tickets at 416-923-1171.

"It's inevitable how Dracula changes with culture over time," explains writer and producer Sharyl Hudson by phone. "I love the metamorphosis this character has gone through. We try to sympathize with Dracula now. He's become more tragic than evil. There's a more human element."

Vampires are always changing. Going back to Stoker's 1897 novel, Count Dracula is something like a silky-tongued disease, bringing illness and sexual obsession to England from Eastern Europe. Shreck's bald and manic vampire from 1922 is more rat than human, hideous and wretched like the rats who filled the trenches during the First World War, which ended only four years after this movie was made, and was still the biggest deathfest in human history.

Different incarnations of vampires indicate how we see death. In the 1890s, death was like a foreign influence. In the 1920s, death was more catastrophe and vermin. Hudson offers a more contemporary Dracula. She worked literally for 20 years to get this script right.

"Just recently, a few months ago, it finally took shape," says Hudson. "I lost touch with it for a couple of years. Then a year ago I felt inspired by all those Dracula-style, contradictory yin-yangs of love and death, tenderness and brutality, all over again. I finished the script within a couple of months.

"When I got started on it again," adds Hudson, "I saw Casa Loma as an ideal setting."

Completed in 1914, Casa Loma was originally build for financier Sir Henry Mill Pellatt, in the Gothic Revival Style. It has 98 rooms and an oven large enough to cook an entire ox. Casa Loma has functioned as a home, a hotel, a night club, a museum and, during the Second World War, as a sonar laboratory. It has also been repeatedly refurbished throughout the decades, just like the vampire legend.

Gerry Lafleur and Victoria Hudson-Muir star in Dracula — A Love Story, at Casa Loma.

What Kate wants you to know

BOOK Kate Gosselin has a new book, I Just Want You to Know, scheduled for release in April.

Christian book publisher Zondervan said yesterday the book features excerpts, prayers and memories from Gosselin's journal, offering readers a look at her life during the three years her family went from obscurity to fame on TLC's Jon&Kate Plus 8.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Don't play Israel, Sir Elton

A British academic group that supports Palestinian rights is urging singer Elton John to cancel a summer concert in Israel.

The British Committee for Universities of Palestine says in an open letter to John that it is wrong to perform in Israel because of alleged abuses committed during the Israeli military campaign in the Gaza Strip last year. A spokesman for the singer did not respond to a request for comment yesterday.

John is scheduled to play at a Tel Aviv stadium on June 17. Other major stars including Paul McCartney and Madonna have played in Israel in recent years.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

FILMING Grammy Award-winning singers Beyonce and Alicia Keys are filming a music video in a Rio de Janeiro slum. Brazilian news media report that the singers are at the Morro da Conceicao shantytown to shoot a video for Keys' Put It In a Love Song, from the album The Element of Freedom. The Jornal do Brasil newspaper and other local media say Beyonce will have a special role in the clip. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

23:46 p.m., Jack makes a movie

Jack Bauer may finally hit the big screen. Though Fox has yet to decide whether to pick up a ninth season of 24, an insider confirmed that the film side is in talks with Billy Ray (State of Play) to write a screenplay for the franchise. EW.COM

SECOND CUP
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A vampire's hunt for love

Vampire Diaries actor Somerhalder dishes on the love-triangle in the hit TV series

Ian Somerhalder would like to preface any conversation about the joy he finds in playing devious vampire Damon Salvatore with the following: "I am not a maniacal killer."

No, but the 31-year-old actor does have a few things in common with his bad-ass bloodsucker on The Vampire Diaries.

"Damon is a very lonely guy," Somerhalder empathizes.

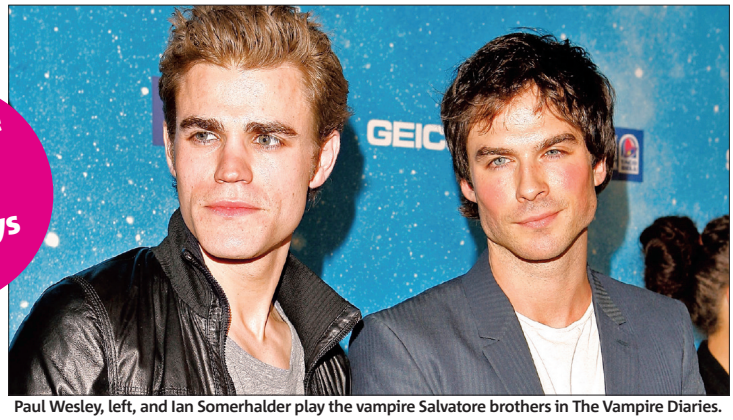
"We all know what it's like to feel lonely. And there are two relationships that he wants back — his brother and his girl.

"And I know what it's like to fight with my brother, and I know what it's like to not have my girl. He's doing all of this for love, strangely enough, and he's completely justified."

The girl Damon aims to regain is Katherine, the spoiled vampire who turned Damon into a bloodsucker in 1864. She was captured soon after buy Damon's own father and locked away for eternity.

Watch The Vampire Diaries Thursdays on CW

Damn's brother, Stefan, was also turned by and in love with Katherine, who happens to be the spitting image of Elena, Stefan's present-day, mortal love interest.



GETTY IMAGES

Paul Wesley, left, and Ian Somerhalder play the vampire Salvatore brothers in The Vampire Diaries.

Somerhalder has found that messy love triangle is one of the main reasons fans are tuning in and making the show a hit — as well as writing tons of fan mail to him.

"Some of (the letters) are all questions: 'What's your favourite color?'" Somerhalder says.

"But some of them ... they are really insightful and really, really sort of heartfelt.

"I mean, these young teen girls are so into the love aspect. They have so many questions about love. They're not confused. They're just so inquisitive about it."

METRO WORLD NEWS

"I find that I can't judge Damon, even though sometimes that's a bit difficult due to his actions."
Ian Somerhalder

PHOTO PROVIDED

Benicio del Toro stars in The Wolfman

Benicio del Toro bares his chops

HORROR MOVIE He is an Oscar-winning actor with his name on a string of hit movies but Benicio del Toro is going to the dogs — or, at least becoming a wolf — in his new film The Wolfman. Metro World News recently spoke to him in Moscow about the film and his career.

The Wolfman opens Friday

Q Wolfman is a remake of a classic horror movie. Why was it interesting for you?

A I have loved horror movies since I was a kid. I saw the Wolfman when I was five but it left a deep impression on me. I watched all the classics like Frankenstein, Jack the Ripper, Wolfman — I loved being scared. I was almost as scared the first time I saw myself in the wolf make-up. I looked like my dog.

Q Why did you decide to become an actor?

A Because of the girls. There are a lot of girls! And also it's a chance to live a lot of different lives. And voyages. As an actor I can travel a lot. Yesterday, I was in America and now — Oops! — I'm in Moscow.

Q After playing Che are there any modern politicians you'd like to play?

A Obama. I like Obama, but everything depends on the script. If it's good then the role will be successful. Doing Che I was involved in the script writing and I really like that part of my job. I can add my view of the person I play.

Q Do you like watching your movies?

A No! I hate how I look on the screen but I love it when people like my films. I'm very critical of myself.

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SECOND CUP

Lil Wayne's sentencing held up by his teeth

LEGAL Rap star Lil Wayne has gotten a temporary reprieve from jail — for dental surgery.

The Grammy Award-winning rapper's sentencing in a New York City gun case was postponed Tuesday, because he needs to finish a string of recent surgeries before he goes to jail.

Lil Wayne, one of music's biggest sellers and rap's hottest stars, is poised to spend as much as a year in jail under a plea deal, though good behaviour could shave that to as little as eight months.

Sentencing now is scheduled for March 2. Manhattan state Supreme Court Justice Charles Solomon said it wouldn't be put off any further.

The diminutive rapper, his hair in dreadlocks, said nothing at a brief court session Tuesday afternoon. He left in a black SUV, flanked by fellow rapper Birdman and others.

Defence lawyer Stacey Richman said Lil Wayne was headed home to Miami for dental work Friday. She declined to specify his malady.

"It is a medical situation that, like (it would for) any of us, has to be addressed," she said outside court.

She said the rapper had planned to take care of it before Tuesday, but his dentist had been out of the country doing charitable work.

Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Joan Illuzzi-Orbon didn't fight the rapper's request to push back his sentencing, saying she had spoken to the dentist.

Lil Wayne, 27, pleaded guilty in October to a charge of attempted criminal possession of a weapon, admitting he illegally had a loaded .40-calibre semiautomatic gun on his tour bus in July 2007.

Police found the weapon when they stopped the bus after a Manhattan concert. Last week, Lil Wayne reinforced his place in rap's pantheon with a commanding performance at the Grammy Awards ceremony.

His latest album, Rebirth, was released Feb. 2.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"It is a medical situation that, like (it would for) any of us, has to be addressed."
Stacey Richman, defence lawyer

Films for females

Corus to launch two new movie channels

Corus Entertainment's female-oriented W Movie specialty channel will launch March 1 with a first-month lineup of films that includes You've Got Mail, When Harry Met Sally, and Shakespeare in Love.

The channel replaces SexTV, which Corus acquired last year from CTV Globemedia and almost immediately announced it would rebrand. Drive-In Classics, the other channel it bought from CTV in the deal for $40 million, also is getting a new face as a Canadian version of the Sundance Channel.

"With women's movie services representing one of the fastest growing genres in the U.S., we are thrilled to be able to offer Canadian audiences the first dedicated movie channel for women," Susan Ross, Corus's executive vice-president and general manager of specialty and pay television, said in announcing W Movies.

CW Media's Showcase Diva specialty channel also targets a female audience but blends movies with serial TV shows.

"With the phenomenal success of women-oriented films at the box office, coupled with the huge popularity of our film blocks on W Network, we know that women have a real appetite for movies," added Ross.

Corus says the 24-hour-a-day channel will cater to women 25 to 54.

Corus Entertainment Inc. operates YTV, Treehouse, CosmoTV, VIVA, Movie Central, HBO Canada and more.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Corus Entertainment's W Movie specialty channel launches March 1 with films like Shakespeare in Love (pictured).

Judge dismisses Perez Hilton case

Hilton

LEGAL A judge is dismissing a civil lawsuit filed against a Black Eyed Peas manager who punched blogger Perez Hilton in a nightclub last year.

Attorneys for Hilton and Peas' manager Liborio Molina announced in court Tuesday they had reached a settlement agreement. Los Angeles Superior Court Judge John S. Wiley agreed to dismiss the case but retained jurisdiction in case the settlement falls apart.

The terms were not discussed and Hilton's attorney,

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TO	Vu	SD	C		7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
2/10/10	265	353	2	TVO	Meerkat Manor	Meerkat Manor	The Agenda With Steve Paikin		Bulgaria's Abandoned		The View From Here (N)		Agenda-Paikin
	211	331	3	GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	Bones (HDTV PA)		Kitchen Nightmares (PA)		The Deep End (N)		News Hour
	215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Office	Omni News: Italian Edition (N)		Vivere V	Omni News:	Ugly Betty (HDTV) (N)		Metropia
	210	302	6	CBC	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dragons' Den (HDTV) (N)		Republic of Doyle (DVS)		CBC News: The National		The Hour
	214	344	7	CITY	Law & Order: Special Victims		Mercy "I Have a Date"		Modern Family	Cougar Town	Dark Blue		News
	212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Access H.	Criminal Minds (N)		American Idol (HDTV) (N)		CSI: NY "The Formula"		CTV News
	218	345	11	CHCH	*Throw Momma From the Train* ★★★ (1987, Comedy)				*La Cage aux Folles* ★★★ (1978, Comedy) Ugo Tognazzi.				News at 11 (N)
primetime	-	-	14	-	Family Guy	The Simpsons	Omni News: S. Asian Edition		Omni News: Cantonese Edition		Two/Half Men	King/Queens	Cold Case
	213	326	15	SUN	George Lopez	The Insider (N)	*Cries in the Dark* (2006, Suspense) Eva LaRue.				The Insider	Hitchcock Pres	Becker
	-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Access H.	Old Christine	Unmarried	Criminal Minds (N)		CSI: NY "The Formula"		News 4 at 11
	-	385	17	NBC	Entertainment	The Insider (N)	Mercy "I Have a Date"		Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		News
	-	386	18	ABC	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Charlie Brown	The Middle (N)	Modern Family	Cougar Town	(10:01) Ugly Betty (N)		News
	219	346	20	ACH-B	Degrassi: Next	TMZ (N)	Old Christine	The Middle (N)	Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		A News
	-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two/Half Men	Human Target "Run" (N)		American Idol (HDTV) (N)		Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
	-	388	61	PBS	PBS NewsHour	Wait for God	Faces of America		The National Parks: America's Best Idea (DVS)				Business Rpt.
	297	652	330	WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	Life Unexpected (HDTV)		Gossip Girl (HDTV)		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men
	296	654	331	SBK	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	Law & Order: Special Victims		WBZ News (N)	What's-Store	Frasier	Frasier	The Office
	298	653	332	TLA	The Tyra Show (N)		According-Jim	Family Guy	KTLA News	KTLA News	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Life Unexp.
news	502	390	26	NW	Connect Today's biggest stories. (N)				CBC News: The National		Greatest Streakers		National
	500	500	33	CNN	Situation Room-Wolf Blitzer		Campbell Brown (N)		Larry King Live (N)		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
	509	504	79	CNB	Kudlow Report (Live)		American Greed		American Greed (N)		More Secrets of the Knight		Mad Money
sports	405	417	22	net	Olympics: On Home Ice		UFC: Access	MMA Conn	The Ultimate Fighter		Sportsnet Connected		Hockey Central
	400	400	30	TSN	That's Hockey!	NHL Hockey Washington Capitals at Montreal Canadiens. (HDTV) (Live)					NHL Hockey: Oilers at Ducks		
	411	457	58	OLN	Ghost Hunters Academy		Destination Truth		Operate-Repo	Operate-Repo	Ghost Hunters Academy		Destin. Truth
	417	406	81	SC	NASCAR	NASCAR Hub	NASCAR Racing			NASCAR Live	NASCAR Racing		Pass Time
family	551	542	25	YTV	iCarly	That's-Weird	Malcom-Mid.	Hates Chris	8 Simple Rules	What I Like	Family Biz	To Be Indie	Prank Patrol
	554	544	45	TEL	Scooby-Doo	Total Drama	Total Drama	6TEEN	Futurama	King of the Hill	American Dad	Futurama	Robot Chicken
	556	540	51	FAM	Sonny Chance	Suite Life	Overruled!	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Latest Buzz	Ned's School	Cory in House	That's-Raven
cable variety	602	567	27	W	Supernanny		Chef Worthy	Grocery Bag	The Restaurant	The Restaurant	Chef Worthy	W Expert	W Expert
	570	580	29	MM	Make It or Break It		disBAND (N)	Video on Trial	Degrassi: TNG	Degrassi: TNG	My Date With...	disBAND	MuchOnDem
	615	520	31	A&E	Criminal Minds (HDTV)		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Dog the Bounty Hunter		Dog the Bounty Hunter		Steven Seagal
	700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	Il Sangue e la Rosa				George Lopez	George Lopez	Lopez Tonight
	571	581	36	MMM	The Daily Fix		Ranked!		Gene Simmons	G. Simmons	Entourage	Wild 'n Out	mmtop10.ca
	575	583	38	CMT	Amer. Funniest Home Videos		Reba	Reba	According-Jim	According-Jim	Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Due South
	616	521	39	SHO	Relic Hunter		*I Me Wed* (2007, Romance-Comedy) Erica Durance.				HawthoRNe "Trust Me"		NCIS
	620	523	40	BVO	Death at-Opera	Bravo!Videos	Arts & Minds	Bravo!FACT Presents		Wingfield	White Collar		Law & Order
	601	562	41	SLC	Rich Bride Poor Bride		End of Leash	End of Leash	End/Leash	End of Leash	End of Leash	End of Leash	ET Canada
	522	506	43	HIS	Ice Pilots NWT (N)		Nostradamus Effect (N)		Ice Road Truckers		Ice Pilots NWT (HDTV)		Re-Inventors
	625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	22 Minutes	Corner Gas	Name Is Earl	The Simpsons	South Park	Little Britain	Hot Box	Daily Show
	600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Agent-Agent	Intervention	Property Virgin	Unsellable	House Hunters	House Hunters	Holmes/Homes
	294	529	47	TBS	Family Guy	Family Guy	College Basketball Florida at South Carolina. (Live)				Law & Order: Special Victims		The Office
	576	582	49	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live		*The Great Debaters* ★★★ (2007, Docudrama) Denzel Washington.					The Game	Mo'Nique
	627	528	50	SPC	Stargate Atlantis (DVS)		Star Trek: Voyager		Chuck (HDTV) (N)		Supernatural (HDTV) (N)		InnerSpace
	581	566	52	MTV	Canada's Next Top Model		Canada's Next Top Model		The Real World		The Real World (N)		MTV Live
	618	524	54	TROP	Rescue Ink		Hoarders		Hoarders		Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Spoiled Rotten
	603	561	56	FOOD	Ricardo	Fresh-Anna	Challenge		Iron Chef America		Chopped		Restaurant
	261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		No Place Like	Open All Hours	Doc Martin (N)		Unscripted (N)	God Bless	Poltergeist
	621	527	63	STR	Look-A-Like	TMZ	The Ellen DeGeneres Show (N)		The View (HDTV) (N)		The Dr. Oz Show (N)		TMZ
	553	546	65	TRE	Backyardigans	Night Garden	Max & Ruby	Franklin	Little Bear	Bucket-Dinos	Babar	Big & Small	Max & Ruby
	526	507	249	VIVA	Cold Case "Sandhogs"		Missing		The Closer		Cold Case "Sandhogs"		Mediums
	300	601	301	M1	*Yes Man*	(7:25) *Second Chances* (2010)			*The Ruins* ★★ (2008, Horror)			(10:45) *The Strangers*	
	305	612	306	PIX	*Lost Souls* ★	(7:25) *Stowaways* (1997, Drama)			*Queen of the Damned* ★ (2002, Horror)			*Remo Williams: Adventure*	
	520	146	-	DISC	Daily Planet (N)		The Colony (N)		License to Drill		Mayday "Blown Apart"		Daily Planet
	637	-	-	TVLND	Red Green	Red Green	Fantasy Island		Hart to Hart		Andy Griffith	Phil Silvers	Bizarre
	605	-	-	FASH	Australia's Next Top Model		FashionTele	RAW	Canada's Next Top Model		Fashion Television-Toronto Fashion Week		

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A kitty cat in London

Susan Boyle's cat Pebbles has moved out of their home. The much-loved pet is now living in London with a friend of the singer because Boyle isn't at her house in Scotland often enough to care for her properly. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Celebrity Buzz

From beyond the grave

WITH SPECIFIC PERSONAL MESSAGES NO ONE WOULD KNOW BUT HER, LIKE SHE MISSES HER DAUGHTER. DEEP. A psychiatrist facing criminal charges in Anna Nicole Smith's death recently attended a séance for the model, who died three years ago Monday, people.com reports.

Psychic Shayne Goldfarb led the séance at Pol Atteu's Beverly Hills boutique, according to Atteau's partner, Patrik Simpson, a close friend of Smith's.

Among those attending was Smith's neighbour and psychiatrist, Dr. Khristine Eroshevich, who travelled with Smith in her final months and who, along with two others, will soon stand trial on drug conspiracy charges.

Simpson, co-author of Anna Nicole Smith, Portrait of an Icon, Signature Edition, says he's convinced they really did contact Smith during the séance and that the psychic told them Smith is "happy she's with (her late son) Daniel. She's sad she had to leave her daughter, but she really had to be with Daniel."

It was on Feb. 8, 2007, that Smith died at the Seminole Hard Rock Casino in Hollywood, Fla., at age 39, after her body was assaulted with prescription medications that left her too weak to move.

Smith made it clear to those around her that she was depressed and heartbroken after Daniel died at age 20 just months earlier while visiting his mother in the Bahamas upon the birth of his baby sister, Dannielynn, who was fathered by photographer Larry Birkhead.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Football and foreign aid

THE LIFE OF A TYPICAL SUPER STAR After her PDA-packed Super Bowl appearance with Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie jetted off to the Dominican Republic Monday to visit hospitalized Haitian earthquake survivors and meet with Dominican President Leonel Fernandez, people.com reports.

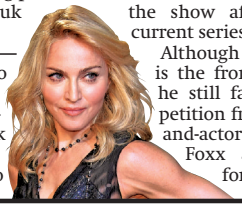
Yesterday, the 34-year-old UN goodwill ambassador — who is suing a British tabloid for claiming that she plans to split from Brad Pitt — was expected to travel to Haiti.

Last month, Jolie — who has visited many countries as an ambassador including Iraq and Pakistan — announced that she and beau Pitt, 46, are donating $1 million US to the emergency medical operation in Haiti.

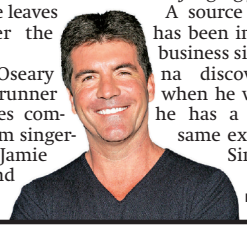
METRO NEWS SERVICES

Time to move over, Simon

MADGE'S MAN IS IN TOWN Madonna's manager is being lined up to replace Simon Cowell on the American Idol judging panel, femalefirst.co.uk reports.



Guy Oseary — who is also Chairman of the singer's label Maverick Records, which has also released LPs by The Prodigy, Alanis Morissette and Deftones — is said to be the favourite to succeed Cowell when he leaves the show after the current series.



Although Oseary is the frontrunner he still faces competition from singer-and-actor Jamie Foxx and former Sony music boss Tommy Mottola — the ex-husband of Mariah Carey — for the judging job.

A source said: "Guy has been in the music business since Madonna discovered him when he was 17, and he has a lot of the same experience as Simon."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

'Part of a larger plan'

HERE COME THE CONSPIRACY THEORIES Michael Jackson's family members are less than satisfied with the proposed fate of Conrad Murray, the doctor who was charged with involuntary manslaughter this week over the late singer's death.

"He's a monster," Katherine Jackson, Michael's mother, said while leaving the L.A. courthouse, according to People magazine. Sister LaToya Jackson, meanwhile, is looking forward.

"Michael was murdered and although he died at the hands of Dr. Conrad Murray, I believe Dr. Murray was a part of a much larger plan," she said.

"There are other individuals involved and I will not rest and I will continue to fight until all of the proper individuals are brought forth and justice is served."

METRO WORLD NEWS

Just a small intimate trip

WITH HALF OF HOLLYWOOD More details are emerging about Jennifer Aniston's lavish 41st birthday party in Mexico.

"Jen invited 50 of her close friends to celebrate her birthday, and Gerard Butler was one of them," sources tell Page Six.

"She was staying at a villa that had a 12-strong staff including a personal chef and two butlers, a private infinity pool, a spa with Jacuzzi, its own terrace with fire pits, an outdoor rain shower and day beds."

Among the lengthy list of guests was Sheryl Crowe, Courteney Cox and Jason Batemen, though all eyes were on Aniston and Butler.

"Gerard had his own one-bedroom villa with a private pool, but he joined Jen for all the celebrations, and they looked extremely friendly but not overly flirty in public."

METRO WORLD NEWS

The Rolling Clean and Sobers

DOESN'T REALLY HAVE THE RING TO IT Rolling Stones bandmates Ronnie Wood and Keith Richards are helping each other quit drinking. The two guitarists are reportedly giving each other moral support as they cope with life without booze, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

Notorious hellraiser Keith, 66, reportedly stopped drinking after receiving advice from his doctor, while Ronnie is staying alcohol-free for new girlfriend Ana Araujo, 30.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Follow these celebrities on Twitter...

CelebTweets

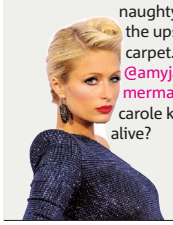
MATTHEW PERRY is reconsidering his identity, **PARIS HILTON** knows what she likes, **JONATHAN ROSS** is having pet issues, and **AMY WINEHOUSE** is looking for some verification.

@langfordperry Thinking pretty seriously about changing my name to klinty kluckson. More on this later...

@ParisHilton Just went to one of my favorite streets in Paris called Quai de La Megisserie. They have 3 blocks full of just pet stores. So cute!

@wossy I must go and remove a dog from the bedroom. One of them is being naughty on the upstairs carpet. Bye.

@amyjademermaid is carole king alive?



METRO WORLD NEWS

Grinding on A-Rod?

I JUST DON'T GET IT Alex Rodriguez definitely has a thing for blondes. The baseball player, who recently split from Kate Hudson, reportedly cozied up to Cameron Diaz at a Super Bowl party in Miami over the weekend, according to OK! Magazine.

"A-Rod and Cameron have been totally hooking up," a source tells the magazine, adding that Diaz was "grinding on A-Rod" on the dance floor at the party.

"They were having a great time."

METRO WORLD NEWS

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Thursday Variable -4° / -10°
Friday Variable -4°/ -12°

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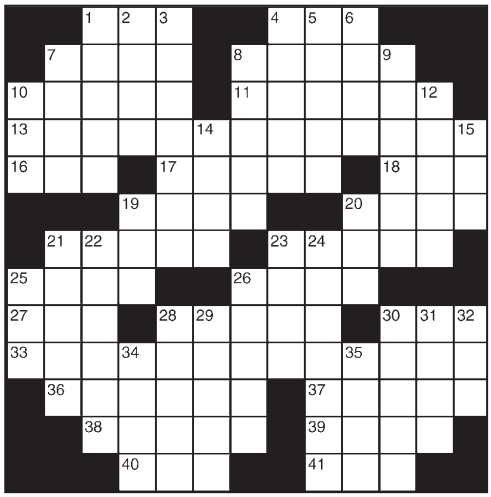


Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

		7				9		
	4	8	6		9	1	3	
6	9						4	8
			9	1	3			
				4				
			8	2	7			
1	2						8	6
	5	3	1		2	7	9	
		9				5		

ACROSS

1 Puncturing tool
4 Shriver of tennis
7 Dog bane
8 December holidays
10 Water nymph
11 Gets out of bed
13 Scattered here and there
16 X rating?
17 Eco-community
18 Hearty brew
19 Car
20 Census statistics
21 Pizzeria need
23 Infants
25 Boat's floor
26 Employer
27 Scot's denial
28 Boy Scouts' unit
30 Bikini half
33 Covering a wide range
36 Muss
37 Mistreatment
38 Tire pattern
39 Unrivaled
40 Hogs' home
41 Explosive letters

DOWN

1 Extraterrestrial
2 Have on
3 Spotted beetle
4 Adar celebration
5 Wonderland visitor
6 Work well together
7 No. 1 pick, for short
8 Google competitor
9 Refuse matter
10 Trawler need
12 Corporate department
14 Accompanying
15 "Indeed"
19 Diving bird
20 Tummy muscles
21 Handed out hands
22 Endangered wildcat
23 Italy's shape
24 Paving material
25 "CSI" evidence
26 Filled with ennui
28 Family-room appliance
29 Pass along
30 Tactless
31 American Beauty, e.g.
32 Chowed down
34 What we share
35 Black, in verse

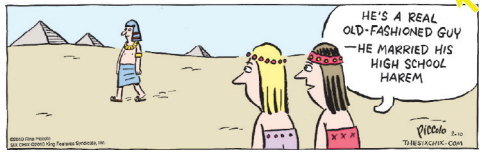
PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

I	R	K	S			O	W	N		R	A	P	T	
C	E	N	T			C	H	I		O	G	R	E	
O	D	O	R			C	O	X	S	W	A	I	N	
N	O	X	I	O	U	S		T	E	R	M	S		
			F	I	R		S	Y	N					
G	A	V	E	L		R	O	X	A	N	N	E		
O	D	E			A	N	Y			O	A	R		
T	O	X	E	M	I	A		L	U	N	G	E		
			R	I	D		P	E	N					
A	R	E	A	S		F	O	X	T	R	O	T		
B	O	X	S	C	O	R	E		R	A	T	A		
E	D	I	E		H	A	S		U	N	T	O		
L	E	T	S		S	T	Y		E	G	O	S		

2	6	3	8	7	4	1	5	9
8	4	5	9	6	1	3	7	2
1	7	9	3	5	2	4	6	8
6	9	1	7	4	5	2	8	3
4	8	7	6	2	3	9	1	5
5	3	2	1	9	8	6	4	7
3	1	4	2	8	7	5	9	6
9	5	8	4	3	6	7	2	1
7	2	6	5	1	9	8	3	4

On the web

For more games and 60 additional daily cartoon strips, visit metronews.ca



Metro Recipe of the Day

Chili Penne with Butternut Squash

INGREDIENTS:

11 oz (350 g) penne
2 lb (1 kg) butternut squash, peeled and cut into 3/4-in. (2-cm) cubes
1 tbsp (15 mL) olive oil
1/4 tsp (1 mL) crushed chili flakes
1/4 tsp (1 mL) cumin seeds
5 oz (150 g) soft goat cheese, crumbled
1/2 cup (250 mL) grated Parmesan cheese

METHOD:

1. Cook penne and squash in large pot of salted boiling water 12 minutes or until squash is soft and pasta is al dente. Reserve 6 3/4 tbsp (100 mL) cooking water, then drain thoroughly.
2. Pour olive oil into warm pasta pot set over low heat, and stir in crushed chili flakes and cumin seeds. Cook 1 minute, then remove from heat.
3. Return pasta and squash to pot and add reserved cooking liquid. Combine gently. Add goat cheese, season to taste and toss. Turn into warm serving bowl and top with Parmesan cheese. Serve immediately.

SERVES 4

rd.ca

For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to rd.ca or check out Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton sallybrompton.com

For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
You've had all sorts of great ideas since the start of the year, but now some of those ideas may look a little impractical.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
You will certainly regret it if you pass up an opportunity to enhance your reputation today. Believe in yourself. Others do.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
You are not as confident as you look (you rarely are) and it's likely you are having serious doubts about something you recently signed up to.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Ignore the critics. You know you are on the right track and you know you are doing the right thing. So what else matters?

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
Cosmic activity in your opposite sign means there is an important issue over which you have no control. Don't worry — it will work out fine.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
The Sun in Aquarius at this time of year urges you to manage your time in a more economical way.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
If someone threatens to reveal what you don't want the world to know, call their bluff. Don't let blackmail work.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
You may be a headstrong individual but that can either work for you or against you, depending on how you choose to use it.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
If you tell yourself that you are going to be bored and miserable today that is exactly how you will feel.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
You are advised to listen to your head rather than your heart where matters of cash and what you own and earn are concerned.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
As from today words will come more easily to you, which will have beneficial effects both in your working environment and in your personal life.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
What you hear today may sound exciting but can you really trust what other people are saying? Show an interest but keep your options open.

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